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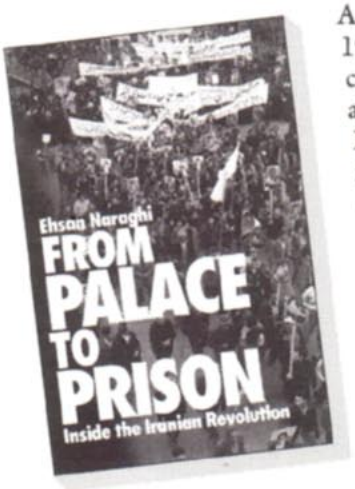

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Editor's Page

Forty years after the founding of *Dissent*, and four years after the fall of communism, the words democrat and republican should be forsaken.

Well, yes, these words did once denote worthy ideas. Democracy came from ancient Greek; *demos* (people) and *kratos* (rule)—rule of the people was deemed the legitimating principle of political life by Athenians. Republic came from Latin: *res* (thing) and *publica* (people)—the body politic was the people's affair, to borrow Cicero's celebrated formulation. But then neither Athenians nor Romans—nor Thomas Jefferson, that democrat who founded America's first Republican party—experienced East Germany, the "German Democratic Republic." Had they been able to imagine that Prusso-Stalinist police state, surely they would have insisted: *that's* not what a democratic republic means.

Still, such was East Germany's self-designation, and if its rulers, truthful folks that they were, insisted that theirs was a really existing democratic republic, we'd best yield them these terms and dissociate quickly. And more: following four decades of "People's Democracies" in Eastern Europe, who would want to be identified with "people"?

Dissent readers—especially long-time readers—may respond to these words with a chuckle of frustrated recognition. After all, when it comes to language, the democratic left has been at some disadvantage in this country. Socialism was the "S" word long before liberalism was the "L" word. In fact, if you turn back to *Webster's Dictionary* of 1845 there is no listing yet for "socialism," but "to socialize" is given a rugged individualist definition: "to reduce to a social state."

Of course the problem is not solely cultural—"democratic utopianism . . . runs like a bright thread" through American history, as Irving Howe wrote in these pages last spring. On the other hand, the vocabulary of the left was, in this century, abducted by reprehensible regimes and their devotees worldwide. Tarnish was inescapable, however much the democratic left championed freedom against Stalinism. The protagonist of Joseph Conrad's story "An Anarchist," victimized by a pair of unpleasant radicals, declares: "Comrade! Monsieur! Ah, what a good word! And they, such men as these two, had made it accursed." Leninists and Stalinists may be similarly accredited. They also share blame for the fact that nowadays, when a mythological "free market" is lauded by many as the solution to all problems—with a confidence reminiscent of communists extolling "The Plan"—a chorus, including some who once derided any identification of the left with communism, cries out: "After 1989, left and right don't mean anything anymore."

It is notable that right-wing voices rarely join the refrain. They don't need to. This ought to tell us that the matter is, finally, not one of terminology, however much some academic radicals, few of whom have had empty bellies, imagine that everything reduces to "discourse." Moreover, if we turn to the issue atop America's domestic agenda, health care reform (see Rashi Fein's article in this issue), we see how the left-wing values that animated *Dissent*'s founders are as vital as ever: should sick people be treated according to their illnesses or according to the wages they obtain on the labor market?

I borrow this formulation from a turn-of-the-century British political theorist, L.T. Hobhouse, who came to classify himself as a "liberal socialist." Synthesizing liberal and socialist politics may not suit contemporary stereotypes of what "being on the left" means, but "liberal socialism" has had a long vibrant presence in the history of the left. *Dissent*, for instance, has for some years pub-

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lished articles on "market socialism" even though most of the left and the right, unable to imagine markets serving people rather than vice versa, consider this an oxymoron. So it is fitting that in our fortieth anniversary issue we present, for the first time in English, an excerpt from *Liberal Socialism* by Carlo Rosselli, a remarkable thinker who argued in the late 1920s (several years before he was murdered by fascists) that being on the left means embracing social solidarity, egalitarian humanism, and liberal democracy at once. He was a forerunner of *Dissent*'s politics, for although not all of our editors or contributors define themselves as socialists, we have, together, stood for democracy in *all* aspects of American life—the idea that democratic citizenship must be social and economic as well as political.

Forty years ago, *Dissent*'s founders announced that they would debate themselves as well as their foes; committed to left-wing values, they nonetheless insisted on interrogating their own socialist traditions. In this spirit we open this issue with a symposium that casts a critical eye on what *Dissent* stood for when it was born, and what it should stand for in the future—a first skirmish for our next forty years.

Our next forty begins when the democratic left, such as it is, faces tough questions. Values may be sturdy, but history, as we've seen since 1989, is quite fluid; our ideas must be a function of the world in which we live. When *Dissent* was founded, nobody spoke of "multiculturalism," and feminist and environmentalist concerns were hardly at the top of America's agenda; now they are essential. In this *Dissent*, renowned liberal philosopher Joseph Raz presents a penetrating analysis of multiculturalism, and we will soon initiate two important series in our pages on "Green Politics" and "Feminist Debates."

At the same time, *Dissent* will uphold its longtime priorities, asking over and again: how can we fashion a society committed to *both* liberty and equality? We'll pose this question cognizant of the difficulties at hand. The combination, during the last two decades, of economic globalization and technological revolutions, has reduced the ability of governments to direct their own economies and allowed capital to become extraordinarily mobile. Labor is disadvantaged greatly; how can one strike against capital flight via computer? Moreover, after being battered by Reagan and Bush and pigeonholed as just one more "interest group"—and having been sluggish and unimaginative in its responses to dramatic changes in the world economy—the labor movement is in a sorry state. Yet its concerns, those of working people, are and will remain central to *Dissent*. As David Brody argues in this issue, labor needs to conceive and articulate its mission as a broad struggle for social justice.

The customary demand of the democratic left was to go "beyond the welfare state," but nowadays it is difficult enough to sustain the welfare state. What realistic program will advance democratic egalitarianism and social fairness in these circumstances? What can social and economic citizenship mean when two apparently contrary processes are at work—the global economy becomes increasingly integrated while national and cultural identities are forcefully reasserted?

Unless the democratic left fashions intelligent responses to issues like these, the terms by which it defines itself—liberal socialist, democratic socialist, social democrat, radical democrat, left liberal—won't much matter. *Dissent*, in its fifth decade, aims to be a laboratory for these responses. —M.C. □

CHANGES

With this issue, Emanuel Geltman retires from his position as executive editor. One of the founders of *Dissent*, Manny has done as much as anyone to make the magazine what it is: writing; editing; finding new writers and keeping in touch with old ones; and providing an education for *Dissent*'s younger editors with his knowledge of history, politics, and literature. He will, of course, continue to be an active member of the editorial board.

Joanne Barkan and Brian Morton will be the new executive editors. Joanne Barkan, a longtime activist in the Democratic Socialists of America and a *Dissent* editorial board member since 1986, is the author of *Visions of Emancipation: The Italian Workers Movement Since 1945*, as well as many books for children. Brian Morton, who has been co-editor of *Dissent*'s book section since 1988, is the author of the novel *The Dylanist*. —EDS.

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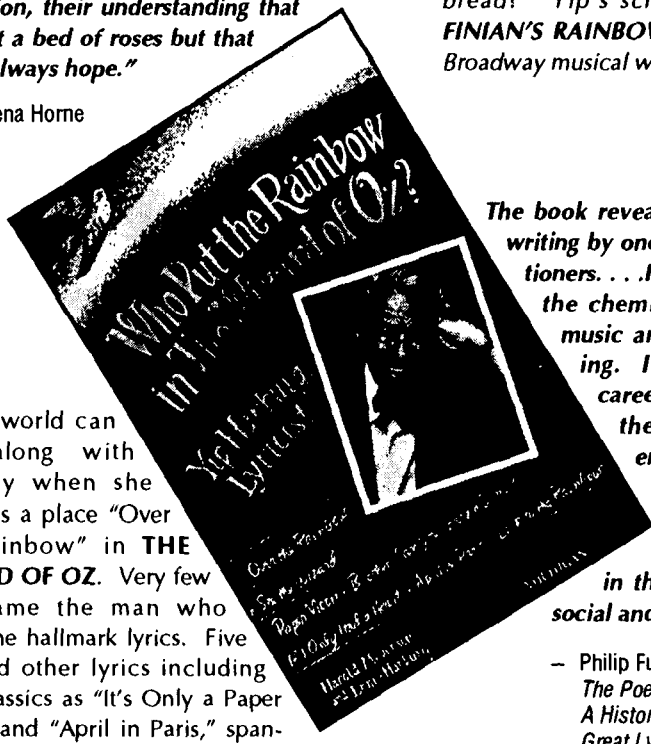

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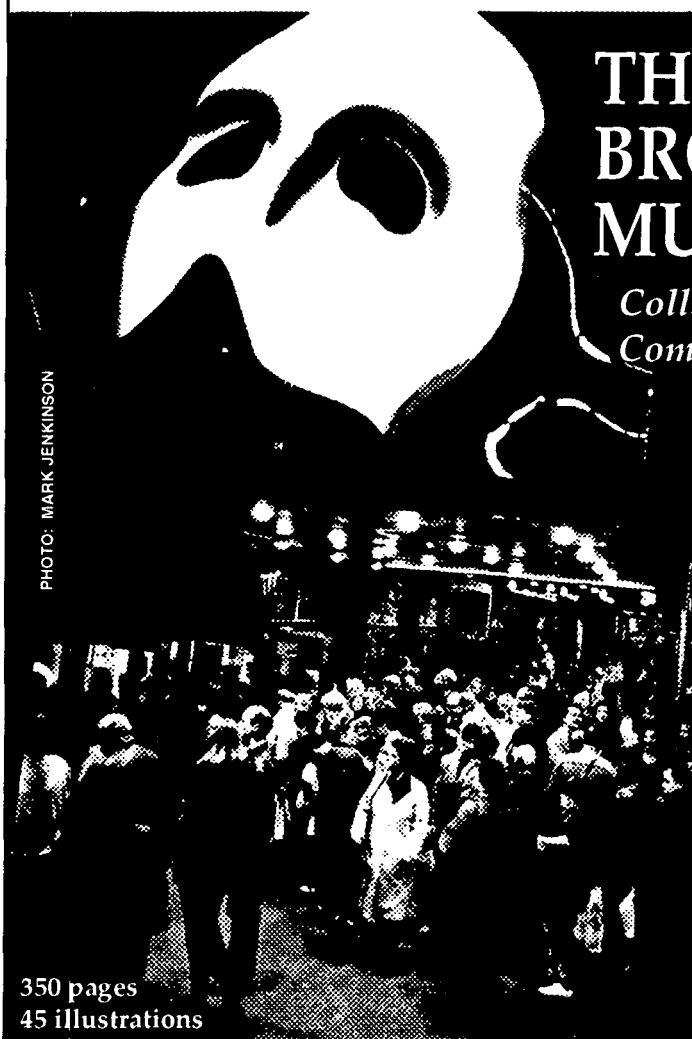

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THE BROADWAY MUSICAL

Collaboration in Commerce and Art

The authors are Bernard Rosenberg, sociologist and editor of Dissent, and Ernest Harburg, social psychologist and director of The Musical Theatre Project. Their analysis derives from the experience of the top producers, directors, designers, players, songwriters, lyricists, bookwriters, and other artists that are leaders in creating today's Broadway musicals.

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A Symposium

The Left After Forty Years

Forty years after the founding of Dissent, *we asked some editors and contributors, How much of what we argued for then would we argue for now? The negative utopia of Soviet communism, for so long our necessary obsession and albatross, is gone. Are we now the advocates only of an American version of social democratic reformism, reduced to piecemeal opponents of the liberal status quo, urging only that things be made a little more democratic? Can we still project some kind of radical hope?*—EDS.

Joanne Barkan

Midway through Norman Rush's award-winning novel *Mating*, a renowned leftist sociologist named Nelson Denoon rails against those who turn socialism into "an orientation or aesthetic or feeling." For Denoon socialism is about "concrete institutional propositions that could be shown to work or not work." Obsessing to his lover over dinner one evening, Denoon remembers an offending magazine:

> There was a socialist magazine whose charter issue had the epigraph Socialism is the name of my desire, from Tolstoy, over its manifesto. They had no idea what they were revealing about themselves, Denoon said. Socialism was becoming a bibelot. . . . He shuddered to think of how few socialists there were who could define marginal utility. And so on.

Denoon's socialist magazine is, of course, *Dissent*. In reality, *Dissent* had no epigraph, no manifesto, but it did run an article in 1954 called "Images of Socialism" in which Irving Howe and Lewis Coser wrote: " 'God,' said Tolstoy, 'is the name of my desire.' . . . we should like to twist Tolstoy's remark to our own ends: *socialism is the name of our desire*."

Everything—or almost everything—is fair game for the fiction writer, so I'd never quibble with the novelist's fanciful riff on *Dissent*'s history. But on our fortieth anniversary, I'd like to take up the Denoon character's general challenge. Has *Dissent* ever reduced socialism to a feeling, an aesthetic? Keeping in mind that only some *Dissent*ers consider themselves socialists, has "our" vision of socialism evolved over four decades?

Denoon pinpointed the place to start: "Images of Socialism"—which served for many years as a *Dissent* "agenda of concerns" (Howe's phrase). The first half of the essay criticizes the Marxist movement for its vague and static vision of socialism; the second half sketches a more convincing image. In telegraphic form, 1954's socialism looked like this: a decentralized economy of mostly small cooperatives both cooperating with each other and competing; no economic plan of rigid specifications imposed from above; not much state ownership; pluralism and diversification of institutional functions in civil society as well as politics to combat bureaucracy and the concentration of authority. History does not end. This better world would have its problems, some old, some new, but they would not derive from substantial inequalities or a lack of freedom.

Today we'd agree with most of these broad strokes, and we'd recognize them as an

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uncompromising refusal of this century's orthodox socialist credo. But we'd also want to repaint a few parts of the picture. For example, the authors assumed, as did many thinkers in the 1950s, that technology would probably reduce work hours dramatically; therefore the quality of leisure, rather than the quantity of work, would constitute a human problem. This withering away of work goes hand in hand with an equally mistaken but farther reaching idea: the end of scarcity. In "Images of Socialism," economic efficiency is needed only initially, to establish material well-being. After that, we'd measure socialist success in terms of how much we could afford to disregard efficiency. None of this sounds plausible today. Working Americans are putting in more hours per year than they did a few decades ago. And given what needs to be done here and around the globe, scarcity will remain a fundamental predicament.

I can almost hear Nelson Denoon railing again: your vision is more than a bibelot but hardly a blueprint. I want to know about risk diversification and allocative inefficiency. Give me something on capital markets and interest rate differentials. Give me marginal utility!

I'd give him the last ten years of *Dissent*. He'd find a few dozen articles there that contribute to the contemporary debate on the economics of democratic socialism. These articles map out, often in detail, how the institutions and mechanisms of a market socialism might work, or not work. The proposals vary, but they all share this characteristic: a willingness to reexamine creatively traditional assumptions about socialized ownership and planning.

At first glance, this debate looks like a departure from *Dissent*'s early stance. In "Images of Socialism," didn't the authors claim, "Blueprints, elaborate schemes do not interest us"? Didn't they call the effort to paint the face of socialism in detail "absurd"? I would guess that model-making grew more appealing in the early 1980s when it became somewhat less abstract. The amount and variety of data had increased. There was Mondragon in Spain, workers' control in Yugoslavia, market-reform efforts in Eastern Europe and China, the Japanese *keiretsu*, additional decades of testimony on the Israeli *kibbutz* and the soviet-type plan, and so on. Chalking up more failures than success stories, the real world invited radicals to delve deeper. *Dissent* didn't change course; rather, we began surveying systematically the territory staked out decades earlier.

The non-Denoonian types in our circle are hollering now. *Dissent*, they insist, has always had a broader, more compelling purpose than polishing up the socialist vision. As left-wing opponents of the status quo, we agitate against abuses of power and wealth. As left-wing realists, we analyze and propose immediate reforms. I agree completely. But as a moderate Denoonian, I would add this: without an image of a better world, without some working drawings for a radically expanded democracy, we would find the labyrinth of partial reform morally bewildering; we would protest with less hope. *Dissent*'s contribution for four decades has been to link outrage and efforts in the present to a vision of the future. So we argued then, and so we argue now.

As for Nelson Denoon, he will never change his mind about *Dissent*. He's fixed forever where he belongs—in a superb novel. But to his creator, and to all who share similar interests, just one word: subscribe.

Paul Berman

The question poses a choice between "radical hope," which sounds grand, and "piecemeal" pleading for a "little more" democracy, which sounds piddling. Who would oppose "radical hope," given such an alternative? From a realistic point of view, radical hope can, in any case, always be "projected," if that is our desire (which it is)—either because social conditions are so bad that practically any improvement would be radical or because

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conditions aren't bad at all, thus establishing a precedent for radical betterment in the future. So allow me to put the question in this slightly different and less convenient way: if we keep trying to project a radical hope by sticking more or less to our main arguments from the past, will our efforts still be credible?

Dissent has always affirmed the compatibility of socialist aspirations with the democratic liberalism of the West, and this affirmation contained the double argument that (1) liberals to our right shouldn't be timid about social reform and ought instead to consider, with the encouragement of people like ourselves, pushing further toward an egalitarian New Deal beyond all New Deals, namely, toward a socialist society; and (2) revolutionaries to our left need not drown themselves in anti-democratic nihilism but ought to harness their ideals to the practical social advances that democracy allows. Those were good arguments, and *Dissent* has put them to good use, and the magazine's history is noble.

Today, though, several notions that spring instinctively from our old-time socialist hearts—the preference for nationalization or other kinds of collectivism, a relative de-emphasis on entrepreneurship in favor of social benefits, and so forth—can be seen to be sensible in some instances, counter-sensible in others. To argue today against privatization and some other market-oriented measures would be, here and there around the world, plainly reactionary. The programmatic choice that lurks behind the symposium question—radical socialism ("hope") versus social democratic modesty ("piecemeal")—has become, in short, obsolete, considered as a worldview. *Dissent* has many useful functions to perform today (above all, to be a forum for debates such as the present one); but we ought to recognize that, in regard to keeping up our old two-front argument against the timid liberals and the anti-democratic revolutionaries, the magazine faces a bit of a crisis.

This crisis—it is our own version of the quandary of the democratic left everywhere—has a dimension that is rhetorical as well as programmatic; and I think that, in the field of rhetoric, we may find some solutions to our problem. Whitman wrote that democracy has two sexes ("solidarity" and "personalism"); and in a similar vein, the rhetoric of social reform also has two sexes (technocratic language and a language that can be called poetic). To propose specific piecemeal reforms is to speak a technocratic language; to evoke a radical hope is to speak a poetic language. *Dissent* authors who write about social policy with the appropriate technocratic language face only a small challenge as a result of recent events. It is we "poets" who find ourselves in a sticky predicament, so much that we have been advised to abandon "poetry" altogether.

The poetry of social reform is, however, unabandonable, for better and for worse. I sing, therefore I am. But where can a new poetry come from, now that the main tropes of radical socialism remain useful to us only in some respects and not in others? My suggestion is to urge everyone—not just our more literary types—to look into the writings of the author I have just cited, especially his *Democratic Vistas*. In Whitman and some of the other pre-Age of Industry radical democrats you can see a language that is capable of making ferocious social and cultural criticisms—without getting tangled up in the issues of nationalization, anti-imperialism and suchlike that are tripping us up today. You can see the great drama of the left—the story of ordinary people fighting their way to a life of freedom—expressed in a version that, because of the richness of its concept of democracy, doesn't require us to postulate a leap that isn't going to happen into a new society of a kind that no one is thinking about today.

A twenty-first century program in an old pamphlet of Whitman's? Please, no. A few inspirations, maybe some new thoughts about democracy and history? Yes, in bits and pieces. A glance at the older language of radical democracy might even help the gloomy pessimists among us notice that, around the world, a democratic revolution is still advancing amid the wars and catastrophes, and "radical hope" has become more, not less, tangible than before in vast portions of the world—even if "hope" in the post-1989 era of never-ending astonishments has in several regards failed to follow the lines that our own political tradition would have projected in the past.

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Jean L. Cohen

I must admit that I felt ambivalent about responding to these questions. My ambivalence derives not from my attitude toward the history of *Dissent*, but from a certain discomfort with the way the questions have been formulated.

It would be easy to answer the first question with a strong affirmative statement—very much of what *Dissent* argued against and also a great deal of what it argued for stands up rather well today. Certainly the relentless criticism of both Stalinism and McCarthyism in the first decade or so of the journal, along with the enduring critique of the forms of domination, exclusion, and injustice typical of capitalist systems, and of oligarchic "liberal democratic" polities retain their cogency. So do many of the concrete suggestions for change that have appeared in *Dissent*'s pages. However, if we are to be honest with ourselves, we must admit that the theoretical paradigm within which much of this critique was embedded, namely, Marxian socialism, however redefined or revised, has lost its credibility. And this, I insist, occurred well before Soviet-style communism finally (and deservedly) collapsed in 1989.

But that brings me to what I find disturbing about the formulation of the second part of the question. Why should we think that because the Soviet Union is gone, we are now reduced to an American version of "social democratic reformism" or to "piecemeal tinkerings with the liberal status quo," and that we are now without radical hope? Have we bought into Francis Fukuyama's thesis of the "triumph of liberalism"? Or, even worse, do we actually reveal some sort of regret for the passing of "really existing socialism"—as if despite all that we have criticized it for, the Soviet Union still stood as a distorted, derailed, unacceptable, but nevertheless indispensable alternative model to liberal democratic capitalism, and thus as a kind of assurance that something different is possible? It is this potential implication of the question that I take objection to. After all, it has been obvious to most of us for a long time that the "counter-model" presented by the Soviet Union discredited radical hope for many and was used as an excuse by others to crush alternative projects here and elsewhere. To ask whether the collapse of Soviet-style communism consigns us to "soulless [that is, social democratic] reformism" is thus doubly misleading. For it seems to buy into the worst aspects of that ideal while obfuscating the real sources of radical hope, then and now.

In short, to continue to speak in terms of the old "reform *vs.* revolution" dichotomy makes it appear as if we still believed in the utopia of a total ("radical") revolution that would accomplish a complete break with capitalist market economies and bourgeois liberal democracy, and which would put in their place a classless socialist economy, and a conflict-free political society. But many of us recognized long ago that this phantasm of revolution is a dangerous myth that has always played into the hands of authoritarian statists (whether in or out of power). Moreover, we also understood that universalistic claims made in the name of one class (the working class) and one movement (the labor movement) were a part of that myth that fed intolerance. If we do not want to appear to be nostalgic for these myths, we should avoid the conceptual framework in which they are continually regenerated.

Once this is done, it becomes possible both to rethink the positive dimensions of the socialist ideal and to recognize the real sources for radical hope. But first and foremost, this requires acknowledgment that democracy is the broader category within which socialism is only one partial project. In other words, democratic socialism must accept as its unifying principle the plurality of democratic movements, actors, projects, and forms. Struggles for social justice, greater democratization of the workplace, and a mode of development that is not guided solely by the profit motive are as valid today as before, but they must be construed within the framework of a con-

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sciously self-limiting socialist project (one that renounces totalizing claims of the sorts mentioned above). It must be self-limiting especially with respect to other projects, other collective actors, other ideals.

After all, hasn't the source of "radical hope," of new ideas, indeed of new utopias always been collective action—the projects and struggles of social movements mobilized around egalitarian democratic ideals? And wasn't this true of socialism itself? Socialism was first and foremost a theory of and for a movement—the workers movement—which created new forms of solidarity and democracy and which articulated new projects without having to rely on any "really existing socialism" to be able to mobilize its members. I suggest we look toward contemporary collective actors—to their forms of interaction, projects, learning processes, and to the theoretical debates these have generated, for radical hope. We might then see continuities and exciting discontinuities between the new paradigms and projects and *Dissent*'s other concerns.

For example, it should not be so difficult for democratic socialists to see that the ecology movement involves, in part, a continuation of the original socialist concern to limit the destructive effects of a mode of development guided solely by the profit motive (in its capitalist or bureaucratic communist forms). Discussions of the limits to growth and critiques of nuclear technology involve a renewed ethical reflection that is quite compatible with what is best in the socialist tradition. So are demands for the reduction of labor time, for job sharing, for flexible hours, for on-the-job day care, for comparable worth, family leave, equal pay, and the end of sexual harassment, all of which have been raised by the feminist movement. Of course many other demands and projects are new and apposite to older socialist concerns. But that is as it should be.

Neither the demise of "really existing socialism" nor the call for conscious self-limitation of movements vis à vis one another entails the end of radical hope. Rather, they mean the possibility of learning from one another and fighting together for common as well as distinctive democratic, egalitarian goals.

Lewis Coser

Now that the suffocating mortgage of communism has finally been lifted, opportunities for the democratic and socialist left in both East and West may have a second chance. Yet, by a curious twist of the zeitgeist many of our friends and co-thinkers on the left act as if it were they rather than the communists who had suffered a decisive defeat. They seem to believe that once totalitarian society has strangled itself in its own contradictions, market capitalism remains the only alternative to the defunct rule of the knout. But such views only testify to a failure of historical imagination. There are few situations in history in which only one course of development is bound to prevail.

At this juncture it would indeed seem likely that a market society will appeal to many men and women who are in search of new political ideas and political goals. But the love affair in the East and the West with the ideals of the classical economists is likely to be nasty, brutish, and short if, and this is admittedly a large if, alternative visions appear of the world and of human destiny.

Those of us who have stood in the vanguard of the fight against both totalitarian rule and alienation in market society must now attempt to reformulate a vision of the good society and of the ways gradually to approach it. This will surely be a most arduous political and intellectual task. It is not likely to involve only a short span of time. It will surely require more than the lifetime of most or all of us. We shall not

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enter the promised land, but we might help the next generation to enter it.

It seems unlikely that in the foreseeable future there will appear a major guide to the analysis of the present and the preparation of the future. No new *Wealth of Nations* or *Das Kapital* is likely to help us unravel the mysteries of the world's economy or of the devious ways of the contemporary manipulation of technological power. But a collective of innovative and radical thinkers might accomplish what no individual thinker will be able to set before us. If the voices of dissent can still make themselves heard they may turn out to be a major part of a saving remnant who, by upholding the still viable ideas of the past and new thoughts emerging in the crucible of daily engagements, prepare the ground for a new democratic and socialist left.

I write this while radio commentators are busy reporting that in Poland the former Communist parties have won an amazing victory over the market-oriented parties of Walesa and *tutti quanty*. The bright boys from Harvard who helped unleash the market forces in the declining economy of Poland have been so insensitive to the resulting human deprivations and tragedies that a near majority of Poles seems to hanker back to the good old days of goulash communism. What happened in Poland might well happen in various Balkan countries. When people are not inspired by some living ideal they are likely to prefer a milder version of the prison house of the past to the amateurish and insensitive policies of the present. Only individuals or parties that fight for policies that are radical but also politically sensitive have a chance in the East as well as in the West.

In the East as well as in the West, if we want to be heard, non-sectarian practical engagement in the struggles of the day have to be combined with a dogged belief in utopian idealism. As Max Weber, that supreme realist, once wrote, "Certainly all political experience confirms the truth that man would not have attained the possible unless time and again he had reached out for the impossible."

Todd Gitlin

The crash of communism coincides with a loss of faith and face on the part of social democracy. Where social democrats remain in power, as in Spain and Norway, they are reduced to trimming the public sector—for some good reasons and many bad. No longer the crusading champions of the one-tenth or more of the population who are jobless, they are reconciling themselves to their new role: cushions. Cushions are no small achievement—we could do with plenty more in America. Still, the decline in the ambition of the actually existing left does raise the question: how do we even get cushions? Could it be that, when the marketeering mentality is so strong, to get serviceable cushions we have to aspire to far more than that—while also remembering, as the sun goes down and deals need to be made, that half a cushion is better than none?

The fundamental economic feature of the world today, as I understand it, is the discrepancy between the mobility of capital and the relative immobility of labor. Investment capital can move at the speed of light, from stock market to stock market; factories can be moved somewhat more slowly but quite surely; but labor scarcely moves at all, except in the form of migration—and Western laborers are not the ones doing the migrating. From this discrepancy follows the weakness of American labor, and the decline of prospects for even the most modest of social democratic agendas. Where social democracy tries to take power in one country, as in the France of 1981, capital easily goes on strike, and the parliamentary road to significant reform washes out. But of course it does not follow that a better, more accessible road lies around the bend. For the

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foreseeable future, to paraphrase Sartre, social democracy is the left's horizon.

What follows, however, is not necessarily grousing, nor the bitter-end conclusion of Durkheim that socialism is only a cry of pain. What follows, I think, is that to get social democracy, socialists have to stand for more than "piecemeal [opposition] to the . . . status quo." Socialism is no longer a design, but a disposition: a spirit with which we wish to animate political life, and from whose absence political life suffers. This means that we try to surpass single-issue agendas. It means that equity matters to us. It means that even when we acknowledge the goods of which markets are capable, we refuse to relinquish our belief in the social bonds that unbridled markets destroy. At the end of the twentieth century, we're all properly chastened—as capitalists, liberals, and conservatives should also be.

In this setting, one commonly hears that an attachment to "the socialist idea" is sheer sentimentality. If socialism is "the name of our desire" but we do not know what this socialism amounts to or how we would recognize it if it were here, then just what does our desire name? I understand the doubt, but do not find it decisive. The moral reason to renew the old commitment is to further equality and democracy—to a degree that neither liberals nor most social democrats approve. The practical reason is that if reforms are not animated by a larger hope, they wither. The hope I speak of is the hope that human potentials for both cooperativeness and freedom can be realized by more than a tiny fraction of humanity.

Radical enough! And this radical hope has to be coupled with another: that human society should endure. In an age of thermonuclear bombs, mass famine, and greenhouse effects, that should be maximal enough.

Martin Kilson

I write these thoughts on *Dissent*'s future with a copy of the Spring 1956 issue lying next to my typewriter—part of a fairly complete collection that I cherish immensely. The Spring 1956 issue contains articles that cut across the gamut of concerns that would engage *Dissent*'s editors and contributors for the next three-and-a-half decades. For example—events in the Soviet Union surrounding the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, resistance in Russian prison camps, Eastern European political degradation (conveyed through a poem), authoritarian patterns in Spain and Latin America, the decolonization war in Algeria, the threat of world extinction from the H-Bomb, the dilemma of the left-wing or radical intellectual in the bourgeois, satisfied America of the 1950s (three articles), and the nascent radicalization of the civil rights movement in the South and North (three articles—one by Irving Howe on civil rights activism in the North).

Of course, today's world is fundamentally different from what it was in Spring 1956, with the end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet totalitarian system constituting the most important changes. This collapse should, I think, free *Dissent* from its long-standing and correct concern with totalitarianism as a defining global reality. Our very notion of a global threat must now be recast—no longer "a threat to freedom" as our measuring rod, so to speak, but perhaps "a threat to human decency."

First, no longer is there a single all-powerful, all-threatening regime system; there is, rather, a multiplicity of dangers. These arise in both developed and developing states; for in our post–cold war era it is the character and caliber of living standards that are being threatened in the developed states of the West. In many developing states—whether the advanced type in South Asia or the retarded type in Africa—the quality of civil-society processes will be under perpetual threat. *Dissent* in the future must radicalize its perspective, criticiz-

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ing the new plutocracy of global capitalism in the West and its civil-society-constraining spinoffs in developing states.

The global power vacuum created by the demise of the Soviet bloc is being filled by a globalized capitalism. This capitalism brilliantly employs the rhetoric of market freedom to mask de facto market hegemony—a hegemony that might well have an impact on the life options of human beings worldwide not unlike that of the Soviet Empire. The multinational corporation is the agency of this globalized capitalism: increasingly disengaged from nation-state obligations, admitting only bottom-line profit and marketplace obligations. *Dissent* must take a front-and-center role in a new effort to re-nationalize and humanize the multinational corporation and its elites, on behalf of the working-class and the technical/professional bourgeoisie—as well as on behalf of the environment.

Finally, *Dissent* must put the crisis of race and poverty in the American system at the top of its agenda. Though *Dissent* has always been engaged with America's racist patterns and legacy—a major source of my own intellectual fidelity to *Dissent*—this engagement has left much to be desired. Unlike some of our neoliberal colleagues associated with *Dissent* who downplay the place of racist patterns in the plight of some 33 percent of black households who are poor, I consider this plight fundamentally linked to America's racist patterns. Today, some two-thirds of African-American children are being reared in poverty. The crime-and-violence cycle that is ravaging poor inner-city black neighborhoods cannot be reversed without a prior attack on the connections between race and poverty in the American system. We of *Dissent* must, I believe, use the magazine to challenge America's racist patterns as firmly as we used it in the past to challenge Soviet bloc totalitarianism.

Ann Snitow

The tone of the symposium question is forlorn, and its terms hint at trauma and disappointment. In about equal parts, I identify with this voice, and I don't.

As a cultural group, we U.S. leftists (Old and New now shoveled together by recent events) may not recover spiritually or intellectually from 1989. Our utopianism took root in other soil. Children of the cold war, we are not likely to be elected to the future.

Sad. But need we all identify as the subjects of this elegy? Many (indeed most) of us have been complaining about the limits and distortions of traditional left undertakings for years. Certainly, to give the example I know best, the women's movement arose in large part because left women were angry with the sexism of left men, men who are mourning now for some of the very traditions that silently excluded women. Farewell to (some of) that past—without regret.

Socialist ideas are perennials and will survive this current winter. But what will the spring look like? In the worst case scenario, as the symposium question puts it, socialism will be a pallid "social democratic reformism . . . urging only that things be made a little more democratic."

My "radical hope" (can one get away now with rhetoric so drenched with romance?) would be, instead, for a wild in-rush of new material, for a politics elastic enough, say, to move from private to public, from body to nation. My undergraduates find this expansion of conceptual boundaries much less alarming than many of my graduate school colleagues do. The next generation seems to assume a wide range of experience as relevant for politics: birth, babyhood, sexuality, media, housework (including dirt and garbage more generally), sibling rivalry, madness and paranoia, irrational rage, fear, mortality, quests for meaning from religion to any number of sublunary ideologies, the psychopathology of

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everyday life, and that fragile yet well-defended achievement, adult identity, including but by no means limited to class, race, gender, and sexual orientation. Socialists used to treat these themes as the periphery; now the very concept "periphery" is challenged everywhere.

In 1970, the great feminist psychologist Dorothy Dinnerstein wrote a letter to I.F. Stone: "You are, of course, one of the clearest voices of sanity—i.e. of impassioned humane reasonableness—that we have. . . . What seems to me insane about your lovely sane voice is that it talks reason, inexorably and imperturbably, in booby-hatch." Dinnerstein urged that we consider the flesh and the unconscious. Among the sources of war, she identified gender asymmetries, fear, rage, confusion, and childishness. Terrifying as these under-theorized matters remain, the left I want will think about them, centrally, without apology.

Cornel West

The fundamental task of the left has always been to create the conditions that make it possible for ordinary people to live lives of decency and dignity. I believe this task is best achieved—or has a better chance of being achieved—when these same ordinary people have significant say in the decision-making processes of the basic institutions that guide and regulate their lives. I am a *radical* democrat or improvisational socialist—as opposed to a social democrat or left liberal—because I am convinced that the rule of capital (an interlocking network of corporate, bank, and political elites), the hegemony of white and male supremacist ideologies, the proliferation of homophobic sensibilities, and the relative weakness of ecological consciousness are the major obstacles to our task.

My fundamental aim is never mere amelioration or incremental change. Nor is my expectation that of paradise. Rather, a utopian impulse forces me always to look beyond the possible—even though I know that in a conservative civilization such as ours (in which corporate priorities and chronic sexism, homophobia, and, above all, racism are more the norm than the exception) we must not downplay the reforms that result from revolutionary endeavor. I still take seriously Raymond Williams's notion of the "long revolution" or Michael Harrington's vision of an epochal revolution that requires a sustained (democratic) march through economic, political, and cultural institutions.

Given the feeble and fragmented American left and the polarized and balkanized U.S. body politic, the best we can do now is to keep alive the radical democratic tradition: deepening its vision, sharpening its analyses, exemplifying its praxis. This means committing ourselves to sustained intellectual work in academic *and* popular forms; it also means creating new local and national vehicles for organizing and mobilizing ordinary people so as to provide them with more attractive political options.

We must forge new democratic spaces in which public life can come alive among our fellow citizens. We have tried to do this in the Democratic Socialists of America. I have tried to do this in prophetic black, brown, and white churches and Jewish synagogues. The New Party as well as the Industrial Areas Foundation are trying to do this. Needless to say, in these difficult times of economic decline, cultural decay, and political malaise, we cut very much against the grain. Yet there is some stirring of idealism and activism among young people. Our challenge is to create political opportunities—as in the 1890s, 1930s, and 1960s—and then convince our fellow citizens that the radical democratic risk is worth taking on moral and practical grounds. I envision three basic stages in our protracted march to a more substantive democracy. First, a shift from consumption to investment in physical, civic, and social infrastructures in order to reconstruct families, neighborhoods, and workplaces that can beat back escalating anomie (including

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crime and violence). Second, a serious and nearly unprecedented debate on direct taxation of wealth (not just income), profit-sharing in the corporate workplace, and the restructuring of the wage system (including a decent minimum wage). And third, a moral and spiritual awakening that targets xenophobic sentiments of every kind. In short, these stages build on the best work of John Dewey, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Audre Lorde. For me, this is a radical democratic project that is still worth fighting for.

Sean Wilentz

The question is malposed. Unless and until things change dramatically for the better, here and abroad, there will be bright dreams and hopes for a different order. *Dissent*'s particular contributions to those dreams come in many ways, not least out of its alertness to the appalling economic injustices that most American intellectuals now seem to take as inevitable. Yet politics in this country is a piecemeal and pragmatic business, rooted in democratic values we respect and wish to enlarge upon. Now that communism is dead, it seems like the ultimate folly to revive the old project of political utopianism, *our* utopianism, while casting aspersions (as the question quietly does) on less transcendent pursuits. Leading a political double life, between bright dreams and piecemeal reforms, is risky. It easily gets labeled half-hearted and hypocritical—and may actually *become* half-hearted and hypocritical. But in view of where the left has been and is now, the risk is acceptable.

Dissent and its friends confront, I think, a different problem. For nearly forty years, the magazine has occupied an honorable if precarious place between liberalism and extreme (or revolutionary) leftism. To the liberals, *Dissent* has insisted that capitalism's cruelties are not aberrations but built-in features of a system badly in need of repair. To the extreme left, it has insisted that liberal democracy, whatever its existing flaws, has fundamental virtues. It was an anomalous position during the cold war decades, but a carefully examined one—and, to those who held to it, a familiar one. For all of our worrying, and for all of the surprises that came our way, there was a certain predictability to the world shaped by the superpowers.

Today, that world and its political alignments have everywhere collapsed. Look at the United States. Although many intelligent people of liberal instincts remain on the scene—and in some cases hold positions of great power—the American liberalism that emerged out of the New Deal and the Second World War is conspicuously absent. And although a few revolutionary sects, of the Old and New Left variety, still cling to a kitschy afterlife, most of the extreme left has trailed off from socialism into the politics of personal identity or into academic fads. The two armies we used to maneuver around and through (and occasionally raid) have folded their tents and left the field. It feels lonelier than ever.

How is *Dissent* to face this new political world and address it in ways that might matter? We could, of course, point to a long list of problems, from the Bosnian horror to the state of the trade unions, and say that we have something to say. And there is no end of technical discussions on these policy-related matters, where the magazine's expertise and its sensibility have much to offer. But I am thinking of something different, a matter of tone or idiom. If *Dissent* has distinguished itself in this regard, it has been in avoiding pompous, pseudo-scientific jargon while at the same time remaining utterly serious. Keeping that up might, in itself, be a great blow for political principle. But in an America where socialism is discredited and where liberalism is in an intellectual crisis, how do we say what we mean to say without becoming irrelevant?

A few years ago, the magazine ran a statement of principles, "Democratic Vistas." Coming at the height of George Bush's

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popularity, it was mainly a symbolic act of showing the flag, with as far as I could see no practical effect. Yet in the matter of tone and idiom, it was a useful exercise, a sort of clearing of the throat, in which the statement's authors located the magazine's ideals in the long revolution that began in this country in 1776. Far from irrelevant, it contained a language of democracy and justice that is more universal today than Thomas Jefferson envisioned. Putting matters that way may be difficult for those of us rightly skeptical of popular-front platitudes, raised on a tougher brand of socialism. But in the end, I think our radicalism really does lie in that long revolution, as the statement tried to express. There is our melody; there are our beliefs.

But then there comes to mind a line that Marx was found of quoting: there is the rock—now jump. I think that *Dissent* can benefit from a little intellectual activism. Whereas at some points on the political map there is too much activism and too little intellect (or intellect merely placed in the service of activism, in endless syndicated re-runs of the 1960s), there is room for something else. There was something shocking when, a few years back, the disastrous fire at Hamlet, North Carolina—the Triangle Fire of the 1980s—did not bring a more outraged response from political writers and thinkers. More recently, it has taken Susan Sontag to rivet intellectuals' attention on Bosnia. The intelligentsia has acquitted itself better regarding Salman Rushdie; PEN has admirably defended threatened authors in different countries. Surely *Dissent* can do its bit, within its resources, to sponsor public discussions on events of great urgency, to revive a sphere for humane protest beyond what appears in our pages. Nothing utopian: only the creation of the kind of democratic forum that seems to be fading away in the media-driven culture of money. □

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THE PARADE

"Some hand in hand, but never, thank God, in step"
—W.H. Auden, *In Praise of Limestone*

Back in the days when the sound
Of the various different drummers
Pounded out for all comers
The same unchanging command,

To march against Whatever
Or to go limp and be
Dragged off in the piety
Of some general palaver

Was only a cut above
Proclaiming with shows of passion
The hemline length of fashion;
The young then, and the brave

Were no less uniformed
Than armies of their day,
Well-drilled in their own way,
And state-of-the-art well-armed.

Time passed; this did not stop
In our newly benighted land:
Idling "hand in hand"
Is our way of marching in step;

In unison, ragged and loud
That can hardly be
Whitman's polyphony
Of differences that led

A democratic march,
As whatever glory was fades,
Now factional parades
Pass by in a similar lurch

"Diversity"? A mass
Of various bottled flavors
No national cooking savors
Stewed to a tasteless mess.

"Quality" (what a *Schandeh*!)
When used as an adjective
It now just serves to give
A sign that a whole agenda

Is not to be discussed.
"Street-smarts"? the virtue claimed
By what C. Wright Mills once named
The "crackpot realist"

(As if "experience"
—Dense, Emersonian word—
Had best remain unheard
Though unembarrassing once.)

When the narcissistic lilt,
The jock's swagger, the air-
Head's nods and pouting pair
Of eyebrows with the salt

—Savorless—of affected
Gestures of affection
Empty of indirection,
A mindlessness enacted,

Our good sense flags, and weary
Grows the old quizzical
Frame that held our still
Internalized Missouri

But "show me" does no good
If I am blind to being
Shown and so unseeing
That plain text reads as code.

Ocular evidence—
If I am blind to what
Is shown and what is not—
Is just the theme of a dance.

What passes for a hale
And hopefully skeptical state
We once felt was innate?
An intellectual *Heil*!

These pound at truth and honor
Like goose-stepping jackboots that
Slap the pavement in flat
Contempt, driven by inner

Emptiness, soft terror.
Look left, look right: the trace
Of sameness blurs each face
In its appalling mirror.

—JOHN HOLLANDER

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Jonathan Frankel

"THE PEACE": MIRACLE OR MIRAGE?

We print here two rather different accounts of the historic Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. The first, by Jonathan Frankel, a professor of history at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, an activist in Peace Now, and a regular contributor to Dissent, *reflects the views of the Israeli left. The second, by Elia Zureik, a professor of sociology at Queen's University in Canada, who served on the Palestinian delegation to the Refugee Working Group of the Multilateral Peace Talks, reflects the views of those diaspora Palestinians who have decided to support the peace agreement. (He asked us to make it clear that his argument here is solely his own.)*—EDS.

Disbelief, incredulity, amazement—it is with such emotions that Israelis have responded to the fast flow of political developments since the announcement in September of the Oslo agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). On the so-called left, where the slogan is "land for peace," there has been an extraordinary upsurge of hope, and the talk, at least in the first few weeks after the White House ceremony, was all of the "messianic days"—a hyperbole used even by secular Jews when all other terms fail to match the magnitude of (promising) events. Among Jewish settlers on the maximalist right, where the slogans are "Greater Israel" and "peace for peace," the prevailing mood is one of shock, desperation, and the blackest anger. There the prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, is regularly denounced as a "traitor"; and word is out that the very survival of Zionism and the Jewish state is hanging in the balance.

Even at the most mundane level, it is simply very hard for Israelis to believe the evidence of their eyes or ears. Can the Palestinian flag really be flying from innumerable houses not only in the West Bank and Gaza, but also in Arab quarters of Jerusalem? Until September 13 it was a criminal offense to possess such flags even in the privacy of one's home. Can Israeli radio really be carrying reports from its own correspondents in the PLO headquarters in Tunis or from the Hashemite capital, Amman? Can a team made up of some of France's greatest athletes really be playing a soccer match against Palestine before a wildly cheering crowd of perhaps thirty thousand on an improvised field in Jericho—the minuscule town projected as Arafat's temporary capital?

As for the diplomatic contacts, there, too, the news has come thick and fast, one event more unexpected than the next. Rabin is received in the royal palace in Rabat with all due pomp by the King of Morocco; in Cairo meeting Arafat; on an official visit to China; in Indonesia (the most populous Islamic state in the world); on a boat in the Red Sea to meet King Hussein. Speed and hyperactivity are factors built into the Oslo accord; and only two months were set aside for Israel and the PLO to agree on the specifics of the military redeployment in the areas of Jericho and Gaza.

It is not just the element of constant surprise, though, that lends the recent developments their aura of unreality. Of course, in some ultimate sense, *sub specie aeternitatis*, the situation in the West Bank and Gaza as it existed before September 13 was untenable. A nation of four million Jews, part of the Western world and committed to democratic principles, could hardly have maintained a harsh military dictatorship over nearly two million Arabs forever. But as recently as 1991, Yitzhak Shamir and his Likud party appeared to be

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solidly entrenched in power, and moving ahead with plans for the still more rapid expansion of Jewish settlement in the administered territories. A Ph.D. student of mine recently reminded me that I had said to her at the time that while she would no doubt live to see the collapse of the occupation, I was not sure that I (in my mid-fifties) would do so.

A multiplicity of different factors, some deep-rooted and structural, but others a matter of sheer luck, had to come together to make possible the events we are now witnessing. The disintegration of the communist system in Europe was clearly of supreme importance. Denied the powerful support of the Soviet bloc, Syria and the PLO had to conclude that the military option was becoming increasingly implausible. If this fact was not understood in 1990, it received dramatic illustration with the Gulf War of early 1991 and the destruction of the Iraqi army by the United States. The subsequent decision of Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states to starve the PLO of financial resources in retaliation for its support of Saddam Hussein brought that organization close to disaster by 1993. The path of peace was thus left as perhaps Arafat's only way out.

To anybody who has watched the conduct of the Israeli Labor party in the twenty-six years since the Six Day War, what is now happening is, if anything, still more remarkable. The entire settlement project, after all, was launched and lent legitimacy by the leaders of that party. Yigal Allon championed the religious Jews, led by Rabbi Moshe Levinger, who settled next to Hebron; Yisrael Galili advocated similar policies in the Gaza strip; Shimon Peres took the ultranationalist Gush Emunim under his wing and made possible the establishment of Ofrah; while Yitzhak Rabin (likewise in the mid-1970s) was responsible for the town in the Judean desert, Maaleh Adumim. When Menachem Begin, as prime minister, subsequently annexed the Golan Heights, many Labor MPs considered it quite natural to vote with him.

It took many painful lessons and much internal party strife to bring Labor to its present stance. The surprise attack and initial defeats during the Yom Kippur War of 1973 did much to shake the overweening self-confidence and mindless complacency that had prevailed during the previous six years. Subsequently, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy provided Rabin and Peres (then prime minister and defense minister respectively) with a crash course in the give-and-take of negotiation with Egypt and Syria (already at that stage led by Assad). And Begin later shocked the Labor party by temporarily outflanking it on the left and concluding his full peace treaty with Anwar Sadat.

With the Likud reentrenched in its Greater Israel policies during the 1980s, Labor found it impossible to outbid its hawkishness, and yet unpopular to sound too dovish. Thus when Peres, as foreign minister in the national unity government, came up with his plan in 1987 for an international peace conference with Jordan, Yitzhak Shamir, the prime minister, had no difficulty in dismissing the idea out of hand.

Only the outbreak of the Arab uprising, the Intifada, later that year, reopened the entire issue of the Occupied Territories. From then on, Labor had a fighting chance to sell the idea of "territory for peace" to the Israeli public. It tried and failed, with Shimon Peres as its leader, in 1988. And it won only by the skin of its teeth four years later.

At the party conference held a few months before the election in 1992, the prominent group of doves in the party, led by Haim Ramon (now minister of health), almost walked out of the party in despair; and, shortly thereafter, Peres, who had no chance whatsoever of winning an election, almost defeated the far more popular Rabin for nomination as party leader. After all that, the final tally in the Knesset elections of June in that year gave Labor and its satellite parties the narrowest possible majority—61 out of 120. Worse still, six members of that bloc were elected by the Arab citizenry of Israel, and Rabin had made it clear that he was unwilling to negotiate peace unless backed by a majority of the Jewish population. With the greatest difficulty, Labor finally induced one of the ultrareligious parties, Shas, to join the coalition government—thus providing the prime minister with the sixty-

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seven seats he regarded as the barest minimum. But Shas, of course, is the most notoriously unreliable of partners, harried simultaneously by its hawkish constituency (the party represents primarily Jews of North African origin) and by the police (of its top leadership, one member is in jail and two others under indictment for various forms of corruption).

Given these circumstances, nothing would have been more natural for Rabin than to decide that discretion was the better part of valor, and to opt for an inch-by-inch approach to the peace process. Certainly, such a response would have been in full accord with his past record both as prime minister from 1974 to 1977 and then again as defense minister in the national unity governments of the 1980s.

That he chose to gamble everything on a full-scale accord with Yasir Arafat was truly astonishing. He was not even deterred by his knowledge that the Oslo agreement had been negotiated by a team working under the direction of the foreign minister, Shimon Peres, whose bitter rivalry with Rabin over the last twenty years has become notorious. It is commonly joked here that the fact that Rabin was willing to make peace with Arafat was nothing compared with his readiness to enter into a real working partnership with Peres. Both men are in their seventies and presumably have concluded that this is their last chance to earn a place in the pantheon of Israel's front-rank statesmen. Their careers in public life go back some forty years, and, until September, they had won for themselves only very modest political reputations. If the peace process continues to advance, their ranking will change out of all recognition.

In the meantime, the mere fact of their cooperation meant that the difficult campaign to win public support in Israel for the Oslo agreement was launched with far greater success than could have reasonably been anticipated. Speaking at last in one voice, these two ancient rivals exude a self-confidence and youthful buoyancy that carry great conviction. Asked by a television interviewer why the army command had not been involved in the Oslo negotiations, Peres replied coolly that when he and Rabin meet together the room contains two prime ministers (Peres was premier from 1984 to 1986), two defense ministers, one chief of staff (Rabin headed the army during the Six Day War), and one foreign minister; surely that is enough, he said, to make judgments on the vital issues of war and peace.

The public response to the accords between Israel and the PLO provided yet another surprise. Even though Arafat has been systematically demonized here for decades—a task much facilitated by the many brutal massacres carried out by the PLO over the years as well as by his cultivatedly unshaven appearance—over 65 percent of the Jewish population (according to the polls) initially supported the Oslo agreement. In the territories, a similar percentage of the Palestinians was apparently in favor, and there the first outburst of enthusiasm involved large-scale celebrations in the streets.

On the Israeli right, it was assumed at first that there would be a massive outbreak of protest against the peace pact. Of course, there would be no mourning a withdrawal from Gaza, a hotbed of bitter protest and murderous violence, but surely the rest of the plan would be angrily rejected by much of the population. After all, Arafat is to receive not only Jericho, an integral part of the holy land (*Eretz Yisrael*) right away, but also a very large measure of autonomy in all the remaining territories, East Jerusalem apart, occupied by Israel since the Six Day War. Does not this clearly mean a giant step toward a Palestinian state, perhaps federated with Jordan, in the entire area across the "green line" (the pre-1967 frontier)? True, the negotiations for a final settlement are only to begin in two years, but by then Palestinian rule in the territories, backed up by its own police force, will be a fait accompli. All that Israel might then be able to achieve would be very minor border changes. Worse, had not the Israeli government agreed to include Jerusalem in the final negotiations, implying that the Palestinian entity will have some legitimate claims there?

Shamir and a number of other Likud leaders denounced the agreement in the most furious terms as a betrayal of three thousand years of Jewish

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history. Calls for wide-scale civil disobedience or worse (*meri ezrahi*) were in the air. But, in fact, none of this materialized. There was one huge protest demonstration in Jerusalem, very impressive in itself, but the crowds were made up almost entirely of religious men and women (easily identifiable by their headgear). A high percentage had been bused in from the Occupied Territories. In political terms, the protest, representing as it did a clearly definable and small minority of the population, had to be counted a failure. The great number of Likud supporters chose to stay at home.

This setback, in turn, threw the Likud into a state of major disarray. Although the Labor party rallied behind Peres and Rabin, three Knesset members of the Likud—including Ronni Milo, since elected, not coincidentally, mayor of Tel Aviv—chose to abstain in the crucial vote on the Oslo accords. The party leader, Binyamin Netanyahu, who at first moved toward the extreme right in response to the pact, now found himself with little choice but to edge back sheepishly toward the center. The basic idea of the autonomy agreement, he now decided, was, perhaps, acceptable, but everything had to be done to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state, to protect the status quo in Jerusalem, and to guarantee the continued existence of the settlements linked to Israel.

Nobody here assumes that it will be easy for the government to maintain a favorable level of public support for the peace process. The basic conception underlying the Israeli negotiating strategy at Oslo was to implement the most popular measures first and to put off the most controversial issues to later. Gaza was to be evacuated now; and the future of the Jewish settlements and of Jerusalem to be raised only after an interval of two years. The idea was clever, fitting the tactic so favored by Henry Kissinger, of "constructive ambiguity."

But this strategy has already run into major difficulties. Arab rejectionist organizations (the Hamas and Islamic Jihad) have launched a successful terrorist campaign, claiming new Israeli victims every week. The deaths have a devastating effect on public opinion, which had hoped that the peace accord would significantly reduce the level of terror. And Jewish settlers have responded by blocking roads in the Occupied Territories and stoning, burning—or even shooting at—Arab cars. Predictably, retaliation of this kind undermines, in turn, support for the agreement on the Arab side. The danger is that the spiral of violence will spin out of control. For a government with an effective majority of one, such a prospect is truly a nightmare.

What can be done to prevent so grim a scenario? There has been some talk of early elections, but in Israel pre-election campaigns last at least three months, making the final outcome utterly unpredictable. Rabin tried this tactic in 1977, and Labor lost power for the next fifteen years. He is not likely to repeat it if he has any choice. Besides, support for the agreement is dropping with alarming speed.

More plausibly, suggestions are now being made in the press that the government, even at this stage, should offer financial compensation to those settlers who would rather leave the territories than live in an Arab autonomous region. Such a move would have the advantage of honesty—the final treaty to be concluded within five years will hardly leave most of the settlements under Israeli jurisdiction—and at the same time it would prevent the formation of a united front of the entire settler population, which now numbers the formidable figure of over one hundred thousand. So glaring a clarification of the issues, though, is something that the government would clearly prefer to postpone if it can.

In the meantime, its best bet is probably to keep up the breakneck momentum of its diplomatic activity, to keep the newspapers flooded with exciting headlines of imminent breakthroughs, and so to keep the opposition off balance. There are constant rumors that outline agreements have been worked out with both Syria and Jordan. So long as there is a prospect of an overall peace settlement on all fronts complete with full diplomatic recognition, adequate security arrangements, and an end to the Arab economic boycott, the government will possibly be able to keep the people behind it.

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The political leadership now being provided by Rabin and Peres is in extraordinary contrast to anything we have been since the Six Day War of 1967. It is as if the two leaders, who in their youth worked for many years in close association with David Ben Gurion, have finally, with the approach of old age, decided to act with his decision, courage, determination, and vision. It was Ben Gurion who from 1937 onward consistently pursued the partition of Palestine as the only viable solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. □

Elia Zureik

WHAT STATE PALESTINE?

For many, the century-old conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis seemed finally to have come to an end when in September the two sides signed at the White House lawn the Declaration of Principles (DOP) regarding the establishment of a "Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority" in the Occupied Territories. Overnight, the status of the Palestinians, in the media at least, appeared to have undergone a total transformation, from that of the perennial terrorist and spoiler to one who is entitled to a place under the sun. However, it is not clear what sort of place this is whose contours were secretly crafted behind the scenes in Oslo, Norway, and away from the glare and publicity of Washington.

It is possible to find in the signed document something for everyone. For the Israeli government, the DOP is neither the launching pad for a future Palestinian state and the total withdrawal of Israeli forces nor a formula for relinquishing Israeli control over any part of Jerusalem and the settlements in the Occupied Territories. For the Palestinians, the agreement means eventual and total Israeli withdrawal, and a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. It is interesting to note that for the Likud opposition in Israel, the agreement means what the Palestinians say it means, with one significant addition: that it will usher in the beginning of the end for Israel as a Jewish state!

Public opinion surveys, which must be interpreted carefully in the best of times, let alone in war-like situations, speak of around 60 percent support for the agreement among Israelis as well as Palestinians in the territories. There is no way of knowing for sure what the average Palestinian thinks of this agreement. This is because of the dispersal of the more than six million Palestinians worldwide—from those living in fifty-nine UN refugee camps in the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria, to those living outside the camps in the Occupied Territories, in neighboring Arab countries, and elsewhere. Altogether, it is estimated that close to three-quarters of the Palestinians have either refugee or displaced status. In the Gaza strip around 75 percent of the Palestinians are refugees from the 1948 and 1967 wars, and in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, refugees and displaced persons from the two wars constitute 39 percent of the population.

To understand why the agreement was signed now, even though it did not address directly the fundamental issues of sovereignty, statehood, or the right of return for the Palestinian refugees, one has to bear in mind the context of recent developments.

First, on the Palestinian side: the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which ultimately accepted some form of autonomy, or at best vague "self-governing authority" over less than 25 percent of the area of historical Palestine, found its legitimacy eroding in the face of increasing challenges mounted by the

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militant Hamas movement. Second, the financial fortunes of the PLO suffered drastically as a result of the Gulf War and the cutting off of aid from oil-rich Arab Gulf states. Third, there was no guarantee that Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Territories would stop under international pressure or because Labor had replaced Likud as the governing coalition in Israel. It was the apparent continuation of the settlement program under the Rabin government that finally prompted the American administration to withhold close to half a billion dollars in loan guarantees. Fourth, the demise of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the Eastern Bloc weakened the maneuverability of the PLO in the international arena. Finally, and most important, the Clinton administration, with many of its key policy advisers on the Middle East recruited from the pro-Israel lobby, particularly the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), gave unambiguous signs of tilting in favor of the Israeli government. Indeed, Palestinian sources sought the secret Oslo channel to deal directly with Israel in order to overcome the White House's standing policy of "peace without the PLO," as articulated by Martin Indyk, the former AIPAC analyst who had Prime Minister Shamir's ear, and who is currently in charge of Middle East policy on the National Security Council.

Interestingly enough, Rabin's government had its own reasons for wanting the PLO to participate in the Middle East peace talks. The rationale for this pragmatic policy on the part of Rabin is quite simple. In failing to subdue an increasingly violent Intifada, Rabin needed a partner to extricate himself from a no-win situation. Here Rabin's interests and those of the PLO converged. This much was revealed by Rabin himself in an interview with the Israeli evening daily *Yediot Ahronot* (September 7, 1993), in which he said he preferred to let the Palestinians "cope with the problem of enforcing order in Gaza. The Palestinians will be better at it than we were because they will allow no appeals to the [Israeli] Supreme Court and will prevent the [Israeli] Association for Civil Rights from criticizing the conditions there by denying it access to the area. They will rule there with their own methods, freeing the Israeli army soldiers to do what they have to do. . . ." What flows from this is that should there be a bloodbath in the Palestinian camp, Israel would be justified in remaining "neutral." After all, this is "their," that is, Palestinian, business.

On the Israeli side, the agreement came in response to several developments. First, Israel continues to be by far the stronger party in the dispute and as such could dictate its own terms. Second, Israeli assessment of the region's politics led it to conclude that a Yugoslavia-type scenario is not a far-fetched possibility should the militant Islamic current in the Arab world and Iran gain in ascendancy. Third, the Intifada, well into its sixth year, does not seem to be going away. If anything, the more militant Palestinian groups appear to be gaining the upper hand. There is an irony in seeing Rabin scrambling to neutralize militant Islamists, whereas as defense minister from 1984 to 1990 he encouraged the emergence of sectarian Hamas as an antidote to the more secular and nationalist PLO. Using the PLO as a proxy for dealing with common opposition in the territories is a move over which the Israeli left and those in the centrist Labor party in Israel agree wholeheartedly. Fourth, on the domestic front, Rabin knew that peace from a position of strength would be acceptable to a populace that is tired of endless wars with the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular. Fifth, an agreement that does not commit Israel to allow the return of the refugees, a Palestinian state, withdrawal from East Jerusalem, or a dismantling of the settlements would be further proof that it was negotiating from a position of strength. Finally, Israel's new "frontier" will be the markets of the Arab world with its more than one hundred million potential customers. What Israel had to give up on the diplomatic and ideological front in the shape of Greater Israel, it will compensate for on the economic front. Peace with Egypt has not enabled Israel to penetrate the Arab world. Only peace with the Palestinians, aimed at settling the core of the conflict in the Middle East, will allow it to do so. This is something that the left in Israel

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understood all along, and that now Labor is beginning to appreciate. Indeed, the drafting of the DOP seems to have been carried out with this in mind. There is more of the Israeli hand in its drafting than the Palestinian one. Twenty percent of the DOP text is devoted to economic "cooperation" of one form or another.

By agreeing to be "partners" in economic, technical, and political arrangements with Israel, as explicitly spelled out in several places in the DOP, the Palestinians have entered a web of economic and political entrapment that could leave them under the thumb of a more powerful, politically mature and technologically advanced Israel. This projected economic partnership is hardly one between equals. It is estimated that Israel's per capita Gross Domestic Product is seven times the level of the West Bank and fourteen times that of Gaza. And Israel's Gross National Product on a per capita basis is close to $11,000, while the West Bank's is $2,000 and the Gaza Strip's is $1,300. With staggering unemployment rates hovering around 30 percent in the West Bank and close to 60 percent in Gaza, the talk about "economic cooperation" sounds more like a cruel joke than a sound recipe for curing economic ills.

For skeptics among the Palestinians, the agreement leaves many issues unresolved, indeed ignored. For example, what is the future status of the 1948 refugees? Will they be dealt with in any way other than resettlement in their countries of refuge? Indeed, even with regard to the 1967 refugees, as the *New York Times* (September 13, 1993) noted, the DOP provides for a "discussion" of the refugees, "but does not guarantee their return." The heavy emphasis in the DOP on internal security and a "strong" Palestinian police force is likely to compromise the human rights of the Palestinian population as long as Israel continues to reject the applicability of the Geneva Convention to the Occupied Territories and the PLO cannot be a signatory to the convention because of its non-state status. Critics of the agreement, Palestinian and otherwise, contend that in agreeing to deploy such a force, the Palestinians may be doing Israel's dirty work by suppressing through brute force dissent in their own midst. It is significant that reiteration of the need for a so-called "strong" police force is evident in four separate passages in the DOP. Not once are human rights mentioned, either directly or indirectly. Only in referring to the June 1993 elections for the Autonomy Council does the DOP pay lip service to "democratic principles, direct, free and general political elections." Equally important is the explicit reference to the fact that the authority of the elected Palestinian Council, including the police force, will not cover during the transition period either the settlements, Israelis traveling in the Occupied Territories, Jerusalem, or the military.

Having said all this we must not diminish the achievements of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement, even though they may not appear to have practical quality. The Israeli government has acknowledged the "legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements." Above all, the DOP is the first agreement between "the state of Israel and the Palestinian team representing the Palestinian people."

The more immediate issue to consider is this: suppose that there is no agreement over Jerusalem during the transition period, the settlements remain a stumbling block, and the Palestinians plunge into fracticide. What happens then to the agreement and transfer of authority? An unlikely scenario is for the Israelis to resume their role as direct rulers and occupiers of the territories at all cost, under the pretext that the Palestinians have failed to deliver on their undertaking to manage the territories free of violence.

A second, more likely, scenario is for the Israelis to continue to work more closely with the PLO, cooperate with them in sharing intelligence information (as seems to be happening, according to several reports in the Israeli press), divesting more authority to it and agreeing to put in place a non-elected, administrative body that would be PLO-appointed and would act as a caretaker until the political climate permits the holding of elections. A third, equally possible scenario is for the Israelis to fall back on the so-called

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Jordanian option by bringing in Jordanian security forces to work jointly with them and the Palestinian police to contain opposition to the agreement. A fourth, unlikely, scenario is to invite UN troops to act as a buffer between various Palestinian factions. Israel has a history of rejecting the presence of any UN troops on its soil or soil controlled by it. With the proximity of the territories to Israel and the presence of Israeli settlers in the occupied areas, it is doubtful that the United Nations would be welcomed by Israel. The PLO cannot by itself request the UN presence or that of any other state, because nowhere in the DOP is it accorded a sovereign status.

Uzi Ben Ziman, a correspondent for *ha-Aretz*, an independent daily in Israel, cast an even greater shadow on the likely success of the agreement:

> There is something in the peace of 1993 which disturbs those who support it entirely. This concerns the tacit meanings involved in it. There are indications that the agreement is based on the assumption that it will never be carried into effect. Even now, before the agreement was signed, it is clear to its initiators (at least to the Israeli side) that the likelihood of establishing the Autonomy Council, to be elected by the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip within nine months, is very small. Even today all knowledgeable persons in Jerusalem talk about a system of rule in which the interim settlement will be based on enlargement of the authority that the PLO will be granted in Gaza and Jericho to one over the entire West Bank, not as a result of any elections but by an Israeli grant. Thus the regime in the territories will not be an elected autonomy but a PLO-appointed administration. (September 5, 1993)

This may sound too pessimistic, if not outright cynical, but the warning has a kernel of truth. As long as it can contain the situation, the absence of democracy in the Occupied Territories is not such a bitter pill for Israel to swallow, since its main concern is not the well-being of the Palestinian body politic but the safety of its citizens and the success of its economic plans in the surrounding Arab markets. Should such an autonomy, which is based on political appointments and nepotism rather than free elections and competence, evolve as the likely form of rule in the territories, for all intents and purposes the Palestinians will have established a regime in the West Bank and Gaza that is not dissimilar from regimes in the rest of the Arab World. This would be the greatest tragedy of the century-old struggle of the Palestinian people for genuine independence.

High on the Palestinian agenda must be placed a political and not mainly an economic list of priorities, as seems to be the case with the DOP. Palestinians must undertake the task of nation-building by concentrating on the development of democratic and accountable institutions that are capable of accommodating, and even encouraging, diversity of opinion. They must insist on free and democratic elections in accordance with the DOP as the minimum requirement for ensuring accountability in governance. Attempts at deferring or canceling elections, for what may appear to be pragmatic reasons, must be seriously questioned and if necessary resisted. Only then will the Palestinians be able to exploit fully the few openings presented to them in the DOP and make a go of their political independence project. Little work or no work at all has been carried out in this direction. Without sound political planning, the economic solutions that are being proposed with the advice of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and other free marketeers are not likely to yield the right solutions. Witness the examples of Egypt and other Arab countries that followed policies of so-called economic openness, yet continue to labor under poverty, authoritarianism, and economic dependency. □

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Marshall Berman

"DON'T KIDNAP ME, I'M A PROFESSOR": *LOOKING AT BRAZIL*

Being an intellectual at the end of the twentieth century means you won't get rich, and your ideas, if you have ideas of your own, will be generally ignored. But you will get lots of chances to travel. On one hand, it's hard to find a government anywhere that, when it makes its big policy decisions, will give intellectuals more than the time of day; on the other hand, governments everywhere are willing to subsidize international conferences, symposia, festivals, exhibitions, and all forms of intellectual exchange. Today's ruling classes understand not only that the promotion of culture can be good for business, but that it can provide a government with an aura of legitimacy. And in an age when tourism has become the number one worldwide industry, cultural promotions are wonderfully easy to arrange. Good business, good politics: nice work if you can get it!

Our ruling classes also know that enlisting intellectuals in the process of cultural exchange is a good way to keep us content. Carnivals are supposed to be dead, but intellectuals have found a moral equivalent in international cultural events. For those who are going to be in one of the big parades, it's tempting to spend the whole year working on our raps and our masks and our floats. And why not? For a little while we'll have a chance to think and feel more intensely, to be smarter and sexier, more like the selves we want to be. We'll find people like ourselves in unlikely places, we'll open up dialogues that transcend frontiers, we'll feel we belong to what Kant called the "world society of citizens."

But this pleasure will create a special obligation. We need to pay attention, to hear what people aren't saying and see what they aren't showing, along with all they do say and show. We have to be sure we don't simply reproduce colorized versions of the world we already know.

In August 1993, I made a visit to Brazil. It was my second visit. The first was in August 1987, a few months after my book, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air,* appeared in a Brazilian edition. To my amazement, the book hit the charts, and all sorts of Brazilians wanted to meet me. The United States Information Agency picked up the tab (it evaluated me as "a counter-cultural figure who is also a deeply patriotic American"). I gave dozens of speeches and interviews; got into a public argument about public space with Oscar Niemeyer, the architect of Brasilia, a city with no public space (NIEMEYER CHAMA BERMAN DE IDIOTA, said a headline in *O Globo*); got many gifts, the most precious from an *umbanda* priest, a statue of *Ze Pelintre*, the Afro-Brazilian *umbanda* god of the city and of night in the city (he looks like Sporting Life in *Porgy and Bess)*; and had the time of my life.

Last summer, I got to do *Flying Down to Rio, Part Two,* this time with my wife, Shellie Sclan. We went as guests of the PT, the *Parti dos Trabalhadors*, the Workers' party, and of the city of Porto Alegre. Once more we were locked into a format that devoured every minute and gave us no time to relax or reflect. I had to tell big lies to free us from our handlers for a few hours alone. (And then, when we did get free, I found myself inept at the simplest human communication: I couldn't make it clear

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that I wanted something to eat.) We didn't have enough time in Rio or São Paulo. When we finally got to go to the beach, up in Bahia, it rained. But we got to see so many vivid environments, and to meet so many smart, sweet people, and even though we saw things from a special perspective, we saw a lot.

In Porto Alegre, and in the South as a whole, people are largely blond (even the poorest, most ragged people), descended from German colonists who hacked family farms out of the jungle a century ago. Cities are relatively prosperous, with highly skilled populations (lots of scientists and engineers), plugged into world computer and biotech industries. City governments appear both adept and humane. They have spent money and energy trying to create jobs for the poorest people. Porto Alegre has a high-tech municipal enterprise for waste disposal, recycling and environmental cleanup; when the new system supplanted the old, biohazardous city dump, the men and women who had lived by scavenging in the dump were retrained, incorporated into the civil service, and given skills that will be increasingly marketable. The young mayor, Tarso Genro, and his commissioners, are rightly proud of their work. Porto Alegre reminded us of some progressive provincial cities in America—Minneapolis, for instance—that work wonderfully, but aren't so interesting. Kids who have grown up there are civically proud but spiritually bored; they dream of life in bigger, nastier, messier cities like Rio or São Paulo or Paris or New York.

In the North, in Bahia, which southerners patronizingly call "Little Africa," many people are black, descendants of African slaves, but most look like what North Americans would call "Latino." (In the South, most people look like what North Americans would call "white.") In Salvador, Bahia's capital, we saw some of the sharpest polarities in Brazil: a lavish, glitzy tourist sector along the ocean, and an enormous network of shanty towns (the Brazilian word is *favelas*) just a little bit inland. *Favelas* exist everywhere in Brazil, but Porto Alegre's seem almost luxurious compared with Salvador's, where the shacks are folded into precarious gullies, subject to lethal mudslides every time it rains, where you can see the walls shake in the wind and smell the raw sewage that runs in the streets. In Salvador's *favelas* the congestion is as intense as anyplace in New York, there's not an inch to spare; half a mile away there are splendid postmod skyscrapers that belong to national banks or to the Bahia state government, built on lavish suburban plazas that are empty of people and landscaped as if they had all the space in the world. We saw immense, sublime modern ruins, abandoned factories near the waterfront that once kept the city's poor people at work; they reminded me of my old South Bronx. But there was another ruin of a kind that I haven't seen in the United States: abandoned schools and hospitals whose construction was stopped before they could open, broken promises of a welfare state that never worked. What happened? The cost overruns, we heard, were grabbed by giant construction companies, some private, some public, all profoundly corrupt and untouchable. When we saw the vast, empty state government plaza, I asked why the local poor people didn't try to start a *favela* here. The answer was, because they'd be shot for treason. Nonchalant fatalism was the attitude that most marked people in the North.

Between North and South are Rio and São Paulo, two of the most fascinating cities in the world: Rio, where a spectacular mountain/ocean topography, with miles of gorgeous beach, frames an urbanism of colonial palaces, plazas and gardens, hundreds of beautiful vernacular Bauhaus and Art Deco apartment blocks, and a flashy, glamorous, vaguely sinister pedestrian street life; maybe the most alluring city in the world (maybe tied with Venice), and one whose citizens often feel drunk and drugged on their allure. São Paulo, whose cityscape is as different from Rio's as Los Angeles' is from New York's; it contains few landmarks, it's impossible to navigate without a car, but it spreads forever and ever, and contains dozens of cities within it—Italian, Japanese, Korean, Arab, Jewish, industrial, intellectual—you drive past carburetor factories on the way to the art museum. São Paulo has a

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full-fledged, vibrant industrial sector, and all the paraphernalia of industrialism that have virtually disappeared from the United States.

São Paulo is the birthplace of the PT and its greatest source of strength today. The party grows out of a militant labor movement, rooted in CIOesque industrial unionism, but also in white-collar unions. It represents itself as a fusion of the Metal Workers Union from the northern industrial suburbs and the Bank Workers Union downtown. The PT has a program and a world outlook surprisingly close to that of *Dissent* (Irving Howe would have enjoyed its critique of Latin American Leninism), and about 34 million voters. It has gotten more than 40 percent of the vote in national elections, and Lula, its charismatic leader, who began his career as a metalworker, could well be elected President in the fall of 1994. The PT program evokes European social democracy today: sophisticated about public health, worker safety, environmental destruction (there is lots about the Amazon), racism, equality for women. It pointedly does *not* feature nationalization; when I remarked on this, I was told that a great deal of Brazil's economy is nationalized already—including some of its most rapacious corporations, especially in oil and iron extraction—and that it hasn't done the workers a bit of good.

One of the high points of the trip was an encounter with a group of PT shop stewards from the Metal Workers' Union, at union headquarters in São Bernardo, an industrial suburb just north of São Paulo. They seemed mostly in their upper twenties and thirties, about a third were women, couples held hands and smooched while I spoke, a couple of women nursed babies, older kids ran and jumped around at the other end of the cafeteria where we sat. My Brazilian translator and I spoke for about an hour and a half—too long, I feared—but the shop stewards kept our discussion going till maintenance people came to close the hall. They asked complex questions about multinational companies, computers and robotics, about the destruction of the environment, about modern art and anti-art, about the decline of the American labor movement, about the conflicts within American feminism, about the fall of the USSR. They were as thoughtful and lively a group as I've ever talked to, and I thought Brazil would be lucky—indeed, *any* country would be lucky—if people like them should come to power.

One of the things that holds Brazil's radically contrasting scenes together is a system of mass media with a nationwide reach. There are several daily national newspapers, a decent facsimile of the *Wall Street Journal*, a couple of news magazines in the *Time* class. But everybody's primal source is the *Globo* TV network, whose stylish graphics and sexy yet insipid programs are often seen by as much as 90 percent of the households in the country. Globo is the leading producer of *telenovelas*, Brazilian soap operas, which are broadcast in prime time, feature steamy sex scenes (alas, not in the three hours we saw), and draw a higher proportion of the total audience than anything Americans can imagine. The plots and characters of these programs are said to define the staples of Brazilian conversation; they provide a legitimate pretext for any two strangers to talk. In addition, they are dubbed into Spanish and sold to the entire Spanish-speaking world; Brazilians take pride in this as a symbol of their country's cultural strength. Our driver in São Paulo, a student and participant in radical theatres, has no television set himself and can't stand these shows; but as "a cultural worker among the people," he can't afford to appear ignorant of their latest twists, and the morning papers publish summaries of the coming action every day. Brazil is full of clubs that watch these shows and vote approval or disapproval of their plots; clubs' letters, some with thousands of signatures, often lead the network to annul marriages, drive companies out of business, afflict their characters with sudden death or miraculously bring them back to life. Two years ago, President Fernando Collor de Mello was impeached by the nation's Congress. But on the day he was brought down, this tremendous event rated only a minor place on page one. Far more prominent, with bigger headlines, a more

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highly charged story in much greater detail, was the murder of a leading *telenovela* actress by the actor who played her lover on television.

Among the Brazilians we met, people close to the labor movement and the PT were the most optimistic about the future. People who worked for universities, or who worked in the health professions or social services, saw a prospect far more bleak. Three things made them depressed and anxious: Brazil's inflation, the chronic decline of its public services, and daily fear and anxiety about violence.

Brazil has one of the most dynamic economies in the world, with productivity and exports growing around 3 percent every year. But its productivity has been sapped by chronic inflation. For the past year, the inflation has been rising a little over 1 percent a day. This means, for instance, that price tags in stores mean very little: every day a new master price list goes around; if the store you're in hasn't yet received (or figured out) its list, they will take the figure and the date on the tag, and jack the price up accordingly. People who work for large corporations and organizations make direct-deposit deals with banks that give high interest rates (30 percent a month, say) indexed to the previous month's inflation. ("Indexed" is a life-and-death word in Brazil today.) People do as much of their business as possible by check, even buying drinks in a bar. Cash machines are everywhere; people wait till the last possible moment before withdrawing cash from their high-interest accounts. We couldn't find any clear consensus on why the inflation had gotten so bad, but everyone seemed to agree that parasitic state corporations (there are over seven hundred, many run by military officers) were a big factor in it, and no one had any confidence in the government's capacity either to clean them up or to sell them off. Meanwhile, people talked angrily about a "new class" that has gotten rich on currency speculation and sapped the national economy's productive power. Luis Schwarz, my publisher, was selling more books than ever last year, and had three out of the top ten national best-sellers, but almost went broke because several of the big banks, after taking huge losses in world money markets, withdrew their credit lines from small businesses. Luis has never loved capitalism, but he always thought that at least it had a coherent system of meanings: you make money if you sell a commodity that people want, you lose money if you don't. Now he has come to see it as pure theater of the absurd.

What upsets people most, though, is the violence. Shellie: "Everybody seems to live in a *favela* or behind a fence." All the Brazilians we met felt that in recent years the violence has gotten a lot worse. They fear turf wars and shootouts by well-armed drug gangs, but also random stickups by coked-up *pivetes*, twelve-year-old street kids with guns, and kidnappings by crooks who have run out of rich victims and democratized their business, working their way down into the lower middle class; now they grab people who often have little or nothing to give, and sometimes this makes them mad and they kill. (A T-shirt on sale in Porto Alegre's public market said, "*Don't Kidnap Me, I'm A Professor*"—in other words, a person without capital, slim pickings.) They talk about the *arrastão*, a maneuver where pickup gangs of fifty or a hundred boys descend from the *favelas* and sweep the beach or the Avenida Atlantica, robbing and stabbing everyone in their path. (Last year the big drug dealers decided these kids were attracting too much attention and jeopardizing serious business, so they cut off some of their hands.) Everybody felt that the quality of Brazilian life, so informal and mellow not so long ago, has turned brutal and paranoid today. This was most striking in Rio, where several people talked about how they "grew up on the beach" but fear to go there now. Middle-class apartment houses in Rio and São Paulo have security systems far more ambitious and elaborate than their equivalents in New York or Chicago. Single-family houses have iron fences that in effect place the house in a cage; although, thanks to the grace and finesse of Brazilian design, it's easy for householders to forget the iron cages they live in.

At the end of July, just before we arrived, the violence exploded. Rio's beautiful domed Baroque Catedral de Candelaria, in the old center of the city, is home to hundreds of

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pivetes, who sleep on its porches and benches. Now and then they engage in what North Americans might consider legitimate work, but mostly they live by begging, smalltime drug dealing, and theft. They are locked in unending struggles with the Military Police, who suspect them of everything (about half the time they are right), and who are said to shake them down. In the middle of one night in July, a group of Military Policemen converged on the church and fired point-blank into the crowd, killing nine kids and wounding dozens more. Why did they do it? Were they punishing the kids for failing to pay protection? Or did they come looking for somebody, but the search got out of hand? Or were they just having drunken fun? Or what? Nobody seems to know. A couple of the cops who were involved have been arrested (many others weren't), but nobody thinks they will do hard time. All the time we were in Brazil, people couldn't stop talking about the mass murder. But their talk went round and round in futility. Nobody thought the state had institutions with enough authority to get to the bottom of it; and this juridical bankruptcy evoked their worst memories of military dictatorship, which after all wasn't so long ago. (Brazilians consider 1981 the watershed year in the life of their still fragile democracy.) Did "the public" hate those kids so much that it would tolerate mass murder and throw away the rule of law that it had fought so hard to secure? Our friends were afraid of the answer.

In Brazil this summer, there were floods of talk about the violence of underclass boys: violence done by them, violence done to them. After awhile I came to feel there was something weird about this talk. It had a pathos and an emotional intensity that seemed to take on a life of its own. Brazilians ordinarily love conversation, but once a Brazilian started talking in this vein, there wasn't anything I could say, except "Gee, that's terrible." For instance, I couldn't say the United States also has very high levels of violence, and I couldn't say that discourse about violence has all sorts of symbolic weight in American political culture. (I did say it, but even the best listeners wouldn't hear.) But after awhile, I began to see what Brazilian discourse of violence is really all about. One story told to us several times was that the World Bank had delivered a message to Brazil, saying the country had one-third too many people. We felt this had an apocryphal ring, but we could see the point: there is a solid, thriving industrial economy here, but many millions of Brazilians who are totally outside it, and who have no imaginable way in.

The educational system does nothing to help them in. Brazilian children are tracked far more rigidly than Americans. One thing that everyone we met insisted on is that it is impossible to get into college without going to private school. But private schools in Brazil offer no scholarships. And there is no system of community colleges, and nothing like the high school equivalence exam, and no way to move into higher education if you're late getting out of the gate, and no cultural pressure to get poor kids into and through college, and no institutions for workers' education (though the PT seems to be trying to create some.) So a crucial feature of adolescence in Brazil is a very personal encounter with class barriers that are peremptory and absolute. And most kids who go through this encounter, as all kids must, are doomed to end up as permanent losers. When Brazilians talk about their dead-end kids, they tell themselves something like this: *Of course they'll do anything, because there isn't anything out there for them.* Because they see no signs of anything turning up for these kids, they

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judge them beyond help or hope, and they see their number as bound to grow and grow. the contours of this drama, it's a story we should know all too well. Yet American culture has more second acts, more entrance and exit lanes, more holes to fall into, but also more holes to crawl out of. Our poor people haven't quite reached the tragic pass of poor people in Brazil, a country that feels inexorably split between the *favelas* and the fences. □

Robert V. Daniels

THE REVENGE OF RUSSIAN POLITICAL CULTURE

Sovietologists who always thought that deep Russian cultural traits were a major factor shaping Soviet communism found Gorbachev's perestroika and the rapid progress toward constitutional government under his leadership a perplexing innovation, though a welcome one. Now we know, unfortunately, that these insights were never really invalidated. Noting the recent steps toward presidential dictatorship by Boris Yeltsin, we can see that the old Russian habits of authoritarianism, centralism, imperialism, and conformism were never pushed very far below the surface during the last few years of reform.

There is, to be sure, an alternative strand in the Russian tradition, represented since the eighteenth century by the Russian intelligentsia, the class defined by its attachment to culture and ideas (especially Western) and its rejection of the prevailing social order. But the intelligentsia is purist and unstable. Gorbachev's perestroika, for the first time in Russia's history, drew in the intellectuals as a support for the government. Then, growing disillusioned with Gorbachev, many of them rallied to Yeltsin and became apologists for his new pseudo-democracy or for what they perceive to be the lesser evil.

Yeltsin's personality seems tailor-made to fit the expectations for individual authority emanating from Russian political culture. He is bold and impulsive, a fearless gambler, domineering and vindictive. Like the beneficent monarch, he claims to represent the united people against the craven bureaucrats. Given these proclivities and the weakness of so much of the Russian population for a "president-czar" (in the words of the *Independent Gazette* of Moscow, October 13) the crisis of September–October, when Yeltsin dissolved the Russian Parliament, suppressed its supporters, and imposed personal rule, was virtually inevitable.

The trend toward personalism in Russia has been reinforced by the presidential structure of government that Gorbachev bequeathed to Yeltsin, with its separation of powers between the executive and the legislature. This American model, depending so heavily on habits of compromise, and in their absence inviting political polarization and deadlock, has resulted in dictatorship almost everywhere it has been copied. Russia is proving to be no exception.

Yeltsin came to power as the favorite of the Parliament—its first chairman and its choice for president—but its resistance to his economic shock therapy and the resulting conflict of wills led quickly to the impasse of 1993. However, Yeltsin is an inspired broken-field runner who takes full advantage of every chance opening. After escaping impeachment and claiming victory in March, he took his modest win in the April referendum as a mandate for personal rule, and set about destroying his enemies in the Parliament—by

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constitutional changes if possible, by extraconstitutional actions if necessary. Impatient with his supporters' efforts at constitution drafting, no doubt annoyed by indications that his popularity had begun to flag, and stubbornly rejecting the zero-sum compromise of early elections for president as well as Parliament, he decided on a *coup de main* to institute presidential rule.

The closest historical parallel with Yeltsin's coup from above is perhaps with President Louis Napoleon Bonaparte in the France of the early 1850s. Overwhelmingly elected president in December 1848 on a law-and-order platform, following the brief but bloody revolution of 1848, the nephew of the first Napoleon brought in the army three years later to dissolve the National Assembly, conducted a constitutional plebiscite to give himself dictatorial powers, and a year later made himself emperor in the image of his uncle.

Since Yeltsin's September coup and the futile resistance of the most extreme oppositionists in October, the traditional Russian style in government has become more and more apparent—the leader decrees and the people conform. The police quickly reverted to their old habits, presumably with assent from above—arrests without cause or warrant, bugging dissidents or beating them up, and running dragnet operations. The latter, aimed particularly at "dark" people from the Caucasus who are blamed for the current crime wave, is a form of ethnic cleansing that is unfortunately very popular with the Russian majority.

Regional governments, which behaved very independently after the collapse of communism, are now being brought to heel by Yeltsin-appointed governors and "personal representatives," and by Yeltsin-decreed constitutional provisions. Local executive power is to be part of a centrally controlled "single administrative hierarchy," and provincial legislative bodies will be reduced to no more than fifty members, small enough to be easily manipulated, and curbed by the veto power of the appointed governors besides.

Yeltsin's economic reform program of privatization and free markets would appear to be the antithesis of the Russian statist tradition, czarist as well as Soviet. Yet even in reform economics Russian habits are showing up. The economists who authored Yeltsin's program illustrate the penchant among the Russian intelligentsia for embracing utopian Western ideas—now classical economic theory and the Chicago School—and carrying them to extremes in the name of a "radiant future." Furthermore, Yeltsin's method of introducing reform is characteristically Russian—by decree of the autocrat—without thought for the practical financial and legal basis that the West takes for granted.

The chaotic consequences of the Yeltsinites' economic libertarianism underscore the need in the Russian cultural context for some degree of governmental management to keep the economy functioning. Instead, we observe the Russian tendency to plunge into anarchy when the heavy hand of central control is lifted, as it was in 1917.

Beyond all this, the Russian antimercantile tradition can already be felt in a growing popular backlash—reflected in the stance of the ill-fated Parliament—against the new speculator economy. With his enemies disposed of, one can well imagine Yeltsin using his personal power to reverse the economic reform line as it becomes politically inexpedient and when he no longer needs to please the West. After all, he pushed the free-market reforms primarily as a foil to destroy first Gorbachev and then the Russian Parliament, and he may be quite capable of changing his beliefs now that those objectives have been accomplished.

Having seized unlimited power, including a free hand to dictate future constitutional arrangements, Yeltsin seemingly permitted an open democratic process leading to the ratification of the new constitution and the election of new parliamentary bodies. New parties sprang up instantly, though two of them—"Russia's Choice" and the "Party of Russian Unity and Concord"—were officially inspired and led by members of the Yeltsin cabinet, an arrangement that could guarantee Yeltsin's control of the new Parliament while maintaining the illusion of a free choice. Furthermore, the

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electoral process was closed to the banned political organizations and publications of the far left and the far right that had most bitterly opposed him up to October. The rest of the political spectrum was hopelessly fractionated among parties that existed, as the Russians say, mostly in the imaginations of their leaders. Yeltsin still tried to remain above the contest as waged by political parties, and avoided explicit identification as leader of his own political forces, preferring to enjoy power as a direct gift from "the people." Touting Peter the Great as the model Russian ruler—as did Stalin—he seemed to regard himself as a sort of elected czar.

It would be surprising, given the origins of this new democracy, if the parliamentary bodies it produces prove to be more than "decorative," as some provincial leaders have warned. To the degree that they may become truly independent, however, Russia will be back in the same situation of legislative-executive gridlock that led to the fall crisis and personal rule.

The near-unanimity of Western leaders and media in swallowing Yeltsin's spurious democratic claims in the face of his crude violations of constitutional processes recalls the pro-communist fellow-traveling of the 1930s. To be sure, the ideological positions are reversed, but in both cases wish-fulfillment led foreign sympathizers to be taken in by Moscow's propaganda. This time, however, there is one very practical motive for the West: Yeltsin has been willing to be subsidized by Western governments and investors in return for conducting a docile foreign policy. As for the Clinton administration, for domestic political purposes it has desperately needed to be able to claim one foreign-policy success among its many reverses and tergiversations, and so it persisted in writing blank checks to Yeltsin all through the constitutional crisis of 1993.

Nevertheless, the united front of Western acclaim started to crack after Yeltsin assumed openly dictatorial power and imposed censorship in the course of the September–October crisis. Moreover, Russian independence in foreign policy has already begun to show, as Yeltsin caters to latent nationalist opinion and as the military who saved him in October present their bill. Hence his reversal on NATO membership for the East European countries, the threat to veto UN sanctions against Libya, and the assertion of a Russian "Monroe Doctrine" to keep the peace in the former Soviet realm. A clue to Yeltsin's aspirations is his new identification of himself with the eleventh-century Kievan prince Yaroslav the Great and the "gathering in of the Russian lands"—a point of Slavic unity that could not have been lost on the Ukrainians and Belorussians. We may expect these hegemonic tendencies to become more obvious, as geopolitical logic, Russian tradition, and Yeltsin's own deepest instincts impel him to reassert Russian influence in the "near-abroad" of ex-Soviet republics, and perhaps in the old East European bloc and in the Middle East.

Does Yeltsin's consonance with Russian political culture mean that the authoritarian type of rule reestablished in the course of the year 1993 will go on indefinitely? Not necessarily. First of all, Yeltsin's incapacitation or death would be a hazardous point for the new system, as it always is with personalistic regimes where no strong successor has been allowed to develop a real power base or public appeal. His disappearance from the scene could invite real life to spring up in his manipulated constitutional structures, just as the post-Brezhnev succession allowed the old dummy communist institutions to take on a semblance of reality.

Second, Yeltsin's style of rule will not ultimately be compatible with the nontraditional elements in Russian political culture, that is, the intelligentsia and the millions of educated urban dwellers, whose growing pressure against the Brezhnev system set the stage for reform under Gorbachev. Ironically, it is these people who have most favored Yeltsin, out of fear of backsliding to communism, while Yeltsin's most natural allies on the nationalist wing, not recognizing their affinity with him beneath their opposing ideological slogans, have been most vocally resisting him. If Yeltsin lasts long enough, and if his Great-Russian irredentist proclivities become visible enough, the nationalist elements will no doubt come around to him. Russian authoritarianism and imperialism are challenges that we are not done with. □

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Erazim Kohák

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS IN PRAGUE

This is the law:

> The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, its leaders and its members, are responsible for the way our land was governed in the years 1948–1989 and in particular for the systematic destruction of the traditional values of European civilization, for the conscious violations of human rights and freedoms, for the moral and economic decline accompanied by judicial crimes and terror against dissenters, for substituting a command economy for a market one, for the destruction of the traditional principles of the laws of ownership, for the misuse of education, training, science and culture for political and ideological goals, for the reckless destruction of nature.

So reads the preamble of the "Law Concerning the Illegitimacy of the Communist Regime" passed on July 9, 1993 by the parliament of the Czech Republic, one of the two rump states that emerged from the second dismemberment of Czechoslovakia.

The bill of particulars that follows that preamble is grim but painfully factual. It details the persecution, oppression, violence, murder, torture, arbitrary harassment, crimes, and all the sordid daily realities of an oppressive regime behind the facade of brighter tomorrows. It may not tell the whole story but it does not exaggerate. It really was like that. So the law draws the conclusion:

> The regime based on Communist ideology, which determined the direction of the state and the fate of its citizens in Czechoslovakia from February 25, 1948, to November 17th, 1989, was criminal, illegitimate and deserves condemnation.
>
> The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was a criminal organization, deserving condemnation, just like other organizations based on its ideology; its activity was aimed at suppressing human rights and the democratic system.
>
> Resistance to this regime by individuals or groups of citizens, based on a democratic political, religious or moral conviction, manifested by acts of resistance or other activities or knowingly and publicly expressed, whether on the territory of this state or abroad, even if in cooperation with a democratic foreign power, was legitimate, just, morally justified and is worthy of respect.

Among the signatures is that of Václav Havel, once a human rights activist and a prisoner of conscience, now the president of the Czech Republic.

Actually, Václav Havel's signature also appeared earlier on another bit of legislation that would raise the hackles on the back of a brass human rights activist, the notorious "lustration" law. The term "lustration" was resurrected from Roman jurisprudence, where it referred to the practice of banning from public service persons judged guilty of serious misconduct. In this case, the law banned for a period of five years all persons guilty of collaboration with the communist secret police—not a particularly harsh or unreasonable measure. Anyone whose name appeared on the secret police lists of collaborators was to resign unless s/he could present evidence to clear his or her name before the appropriate commission made up of persons whose names did not appear on the list . . . or had been deleted in time.

Unfortunately, the secret police lists are rather less than dependable. The State Security (StB) were masters of disinformation: their records were not only inaccurate but also intentionally falsified. In addition to actual collaborators, they included the names of persons whom some policeman or other at one time considered susceptible to cajoling or blackmail. Václav Havel's name appeared on them: it seems that when he was first interrogated, years ago, the agent mistook his habitually courteous demeanor for friendliness.

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On the lists are the names of countless others, not nearly prominent enough to be above suspicion like Havel. Though worthless as proof, the lists could sow seeds of suspicion—and did. Promptly leaked to the yellow press, they did not help build an atmosphere of toleration.

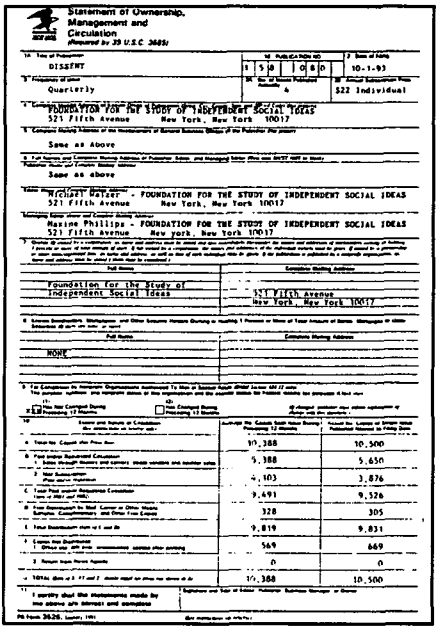
Inside the country, the criticism was rather subdued. With the yellow press and its passionate following ever on the alert to raise the cry of "Soft on Communism!" it is wise to weigh one's words carefully. The reaction abroad, including in the European Human Rights Commission, was unambiguous: so much for velvet. To some observers, Czechoslovakia seemed about to take its place alongside General Pinochet's Chile.

It is all too easy to criticize such legislation. It does bear the marks of the binary vision so dear to John Foster Dulles and Vyacheslav Molotov, not of Masaryk's democracy or Havel's call for national reconciliation. It lumps together people of vastly different motivations and deeds. There is, surely, a difference between a person terrorized and blackmailed into formal cooperation with the police and the eager, voluntary agent. Similarly, there is a world of difference between a person who joined the Communist party during Dubček's attempt to give socialism a human face and the person who joined it in the 1970s to take advantage of the Soviet occupation. The law ignores all such differences. Just like the communist legislation after the 1948 coup, it admits only the righteous, and bids us consign anyone who might be suspect of waywardness to the nethermost regions of hell. As Americans found out in the 1950s, that is not a very good way to build a free society.

Yet such criticism, however justified, conveniently ignores the hard realities of the postcommunist world. The basic parallel is not with America's McCarthy era but with Germany's postwar years and the problem of de-Nazification. How do you go about purging a society penetrated at all levels by a very great evil? After twelve years of Nazi rule, the entire social structure of Germany had become an interlocking system of various levels of collaboration. Had the Allied authorities scrupulously observed all the niceties of law, they could have never penetrated that interlocking system. Yet it was absolutely urgent to break the Nazi stranglehold on German life. Some of the de-Nazification measures were significantly harsher than the much-criticized Czech legislation today. Yet at the time critics took the occupation authorities and the successor regimes to task for not carrying out de-Nazification radically and swiftly enough.

The Nazis ruled Germany for all of twelve years. The communist rule in Czechoslovakia lasted forty-two years. The task of decommunization was far more daunting: after more than a generation, there were few personalities or institutions left over from the precommunist era to be dusted off and revived. There was nothing but the heritage of Communism—and the urgent need to break its stranglehold on our society.

The defenders of the various decommunization laws present it as a tragic conflict between high moral principles and the reality of practical politics. Yes, in the ethereal realm of moral philosophy, civil rights—presumption of innocence, rejection of collective guilt—must be sacred. We all, they argue, honor the noble ideals of Havel's dissident years. But we need to act. The problem is not just that it is morally abhorrent to have murderers and torturers



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NONE

	10,388	10,500
	5,388	5,650
	4,103	3,876
	9,491	9,526
	328	305
	9,819	9,831
	569	669
	0	0
	10,388	10,500

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continue in their posts. There is also the practical problem that the men and women of the old regime lack both the competence and the interest for carrying out the democratic transformation. Yes, the "lustration" law is a very blunt instrument: a certain number of innocent people will suffer harm along with the many guilty. That is regrettable. But while philosophers can speak of moral absolutes, politicians responsible for the transformation of our society must follow the rule of utility, the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people. In the world of practical policy, the injury of the innocent is a regrettable price we must accept the same way a commander must accept casualties. The task of purging secret police agents from public life is too crucial, too urgent.

Similar considerations apply to the law condemning the leaders and members of the Communist party for the tragedy of the past forty years. That, too, is a blunt instrument, and there will be individuals whom it will penalize unjustly. To its defenders, though, it is again a conflict between the lofty ideals of philosophy and the demands of practical politics. Prior to the passage of that law, a person who served the Soviet-imposed regime as, say, a radio propagandist remained a worthy citizen, the person who repeated news from Radio Free Europe a criminal. It was absolutely urgent to say that the nightmare regime of the past forty years was an illegitimate, contemptible one—and the people who kept faith with the tradition of Masaryk's Czechoslovakia were patriots, not traitors. It was crucial for very mundane legal reasons, for instance to protect the former political prisoners who would otherwise continue to be simply persons with a criminal record—with all that entails in a very bureaucratic society. But it was crucial also for national reconciliation. As priests and psychiatrists know, there can be no absolution without a confession. Before wounds could start healing, we had to admit that there were wounds. Yes, there will be innocent people hurt in the process, we are told, and that is regrettable. But it is a price we must accept for the sake of a far greater good. After all, you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs.

It is, in a way, a typically Czech solution—the wolf gets fed but the goat is not harmed. Philosophically, we continue to honor the lofty ideals of T.G. Masaryk and of Václav Havel in his dissident days: philosophy is the realm of the moral imperative. In practical politics, however, we are realists, recognizing the principle of utility and accepting, however regretfully, the price that entails. There really is no conflict, since we are dealing with two wholly distinct realms, that of philosophical speculation and that of practical action. Havel as dissident could indulge in the luxury of moral imperatives. Havel as president must accept the responsibility for acting—and, as Goethe knew, the one who acts is always guilty.

Or so runs the argument. Unfortunately, the solution is not only painfully reminiscent of the old regime but also a bit too neat. The problem with the decommunization laws is not only that, as practical legislation, they deviate from abstract moral ideals, but that their very practical impact is harmful. The problem is not simply the injury to the innocent that we might accept as a regrettable but necessary price. The problem is also the injury to our budding legal system. We need to purge our society of those who ruled it for the past forty-two years, but we also need to build the legal foundations of a free society for the next forty-two years and more.

So the problem with the lustration law is not simply the few—actually, not so few—innocent who get hurt by it. Far more basically, the law sets a precedent of the presumption of guilt, and that is far more serious. Presumption of innocence is absolutely crucial for a free society, yet here the accused are deemed guilty until they clear their name—and the accusation can be based on something as untrustworthy as the records of the communist secret police reprinted in a tabloid. Even if every single one of the persons on the list were truly a villain, presuming them to be so until proven innocent renders a society vulnerable to every rabble-rouser—and there is no shortage of those in the postcommunist world.

So, too, with the law condemning the Communist party as a criminal organization.

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The problem is not simply that some innocent people will be hurt by it. That, again, is a problem one could counter with the principle of the greatest good for the greatest number. Far more serious is that the law enshrines in our legal practice the principle of collective guilt. Yet whenever a person can be judged guilty simply by belonging to a particular group—being a Jew, being a Christian, being a communist—building a free society becomes devilishly difficult.

Here the argument that we are comparing apples and oranges—abstract moral principles with practical politics—does not hold. Nor does the argument from social utility and the regrettable need to accept casualties. Here we are dealing with two equally practical considerations, the basic contradiction of all de-Nazification. After forty-two years of totalitarian rule, we need to purge our society of those who perpetrated and perpetuated that rule—*and* we need to purge it of the principles on which that rule was based. Those two needs are both legitimate, both painfully practical—and all too often contradictory.

Self-righteousness is not to the point. Americans did not solve that problem after the Civil War: they gradually outlived it. So did the Germans after the Second World War. Perhaps the Czechs and the Slovaks and all the survivors of communism will have to outlive it, too, over the course of a generation. It simply is not a clear-cut issue but a genuine dilemma.

Except for one consideration: in thirty years, the men and women of the old regime, however abhorrent, will fade from the scene, but the legal principles that we now establish will still be very much with us. There is really not much that the West can do to help build a free society in the postcommunist lands except perhaps to remind us that there are two sides to every story . . . but having made that point, to help us keep our priorities straight.

Postscript: After I wrote this, I received a copy of a new Higher Education Law in which the Czech Parliament abolished tenure and terminated all tenured contracts. Those of us who wish to continue in our posts will have to reapply—and our suitability as teachers will be judged by commissions appointed by the Ministry of Education. If approved, we can receive a term contract of two to five years. It all sounds so wearily familiar, except that this time the authors are genuinely convinced that they are fighting for democracy—or perhaps for democratic capitalism—against totalitarian socialism, the road to serfdom. We need help more urgently than I realized. □

Tadeusz Kowalik

LETTER FROM WARSAW

Poland has once again become a very interesting country. The Polish elections were overshadowed by events in Russia, but despite all the differences, recent developments in the two countries should be seen as part of the same trend. All this is a very bitter lesson for the economic shock therapists—the "big bangers."

This letter is being written shortly after parliamentary elections in Poland, which brought a spectacular victory to the left. Two parties widely regarded as successors of the former Communist party and its Peasants' party ally have together won two-thirds of the seats in the Seym, and still more in the upper chamber. And almost 10 percent of the remaining seats were won by Labor Union, a new party of the left led by former Solidarity activists such as Karol Modzelewski.

Thus, Poland may once again claim to be a

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pioneer, this time in the transition from free-market liberalism to a politics of the left. It is true that Poland was preceded along this path by Lithuania, where a reformed Communist party was the winner in free elections. But Poland is of particular interest for at least two reasons. In Lithuania, a right-wing regime failed because it did not bring about any comprehensive economic reform. This was not the case in Poland, which has been widely praised (more in the West than in the East, and least of all inside Poland itself) as the postcommunist country that has traveled the farthest on the road to a private market economy. Poland's Balcerowicz Plan has been regarded as the model to be emulated by all other postcommunist countries. Second, what is interesting about the Polish elections is not so much the victory of the left as the wholesale defeat of the right, which was simply swept out of the parliament. None of the openly right-wing parties, including that of former prime minister Jan Olszewski, will enter the new parliament. The party of the eccentric emigré businessman Stanislaw Tyminski, so successful three years ago, got only one-tenth of the votes it attracted in 1990. The National Christian Union—openly supported by the Catholic clergy—disappeared from the Parliament. On Sundays in church, especially in the villages, believers listened meekly to the priest's instructions to vote for true Catholics—and then went off to vote for the radicals. In this new situation, the burden of the whole right has to be taken up by the rather centrist party of Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Jacek Kuron (the Democratic Union), which got only 10 percent of the vote and 15 percent of the seats in the Seym.

I shall not dwell in detail upon the causes of this radical shift to the left, since it was anticipated in many publications (including my articles in *Dissent*). It was clear to many economists, sociologists, and politicians that workers would not long stand for the enormous costs of "shock therapy" and economic policies glaringly favoring private as against public enterprises. These policies generated deepening income disparities and increased the unemployment rate, already one of the highest in Europe.

Privatization got a particularly bad reception in Poland. In a recent survey, respondents were asked their associations with the term "privatization." Almost half listed such words as swindle, misery, robbery, exploitation, and so on. Only 10 percent associated privatization with such positive ideas as greater opportunity, higher pay, and progress.

On a "Third Road"?

What does the left's victory mean? Is Poland embarking on the economic "third road" that some of us have advocated? Will the new government try to initiate a policy of full employment, diminished income disparities, and employee participation in management, and put public and private ownership on an equal footing? Will it stop trying to weaken trade unions and instead seek a "social agreement" with labor?

The answers are not at all certain. This is the case even though the recently deposed right-wing government was itself forced to change its policies because of public opposition to its free-market "revolution from above." It finally accepted employee-owned companies as one of the pillars of privatization; it launched the "Pact on State Enterprise in a Time of Transformation," which envisaged a three-party commission to negotiate some aspects of incomes policy; and shortly before the election it announced an active unemployment policy. Moreover, the last electoral campaign revealed a telling convergence of a number of political parties, which began to compete over which could be the most radical. Limiting unemployment, for example, became the central theme of the campaign. Conservative liberals took up the slogan "One million new jobs," and the leaders of the Social Democratic party immediately accused them of stealing it.

Even so, the electorate's shift to the left may come to very little in our "half democracy." Several factors will tend to blunt the effect of the election.

First, the power elite has much greater freedom of action in Poland than in countries

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with a longer democratic tradition. This is because of the lack of mature local party structures and the absence of mediating institutions and organizations that could articulate different interests and, above all, control their representatives between elections.

Second, a great part of the electorate voted not so much *for* the left as *against* the right. Any unconventional steps toward the "third road" undertaken by former Communist party activists can easily be attacked as an attempt to restore an old system. This is one of the reasons why the leaders of two other parties regarded as potential coalition partners (the Peasant party and the Labor Union) declared that they would not take part in a government dominated by the postcommunist Alliance of the Democratic Left.

The social and economic costs of systemic transformation should now be negotiated with the representatives of the main social groups. The peasants are in an advantageous position here, because their party is probably the most powerful lobby in the Parliament. The case of employees, particularly blue-collar workers, is much more complicated. Of the three nationwide trade unions, only one (OPZZ) is represented in Parliament (after the Social Democracy party it is the second largest member of the Alliance).

No democratic government in Poland today can manage the economy and guide the process of transformation without the cooperation of the trade unions. But prospects for cooperation seem bleak. It was the Solidarity Trade Union faction in parliament that sponsored the vote of censure against the government that precipitated the recent elections. But its victory was short-lived: Solidarity was blamed by the public for its longstanding support of the government's "shock therapy" policies and lost all its seats in parliament. TU Solidarity is now probably the left's most powerful enemy; its leaders are the most militant advocates of the "de-communization" of Poland—and the most militant opponents of social democratic policies. Refusing to acknowledge their electoral defeat, they have declared that they will do their best to bring about new elections in order to reshape the distribution of power. Another trade union, "Solidarity 1980," has modest political ambitions, limiting its demands to issues of working conditions and wages, but its stance toward the new government cannot be predicted. Highly suspicious of the government and Lech Walesa, it did not want to take part in negotiations over the Pact on State Enterprises.

Not even the cooperation of the OPZZ is assured. Bearing in mind the bitter lesson of Solidarity, its leader has already declared that it would place no "protective umbrella" over government policy. Some observers predict that the OPZZ will soon move away from its partners in the Alliance and eventually create an independent faction in Parliament.

I don't think the situation is entirely hopeless. But the ruling elite must commit itself soon to a long-term strategy to bring about a social accord. A dramatic appeal for support to all the trade unions might open the way—along with a clear-cut strategy aiming at a new economic model, building on Austrian and Swedish experience. The OPZZ would probably take the risk of cooperating in such circumstances, and the extreme right-wing leaders of Solidarity could be isolated or replaced by moderates.

International pressures, however, create very unfavorable conditions for the reorientation of social and economic policy in Poland. A heavily indebted country can hardly have a free hand in shaping its economic future. Debt reduction on the part of the Paris Club is conditional; still more uncertain is the "generosity" of the London Club. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have promised to extend credit—conditionally. The first reactions of the West seem to show that it is ready to accept the left's victory, provided that there is no substantial change in economic policy. The West seems to have learned nothing from recent events in Moscow.

The first declarations of the Alliance's leaders, intended to appease foreign diplomats and international capital, don't augur well for Poland's future. Their statements bring to mind a recent case when another electoral promise to change the economic policy was quickly broken.

In the Fall 1991 *Dissent* I described an

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unexpected outcome of the presidential election. During the campaign, Walesa sharply criticized the Balcerowicz Plan from the left. As president he abruptly changed his stance, retaining Balcerowicz as deputy prime minister and minister of finance and supporting his program. Walesa never explained this sudden shift, but there was a widespread perception that it was a result of pressure from abroad. And one has to take into account the fact that an "organizational network of free marketeers" has grown stronger during the last few years.

So far Walesa remains unpredictable. Will he support the new government? The first signals are mixed. On the one hand, he promises to conform to the democratic will of the electorate; on the other, he recently expressed his readiness to preserve "reforms" even if he has to copy the "Yeltsin method" (this was said shortly before the open battles on the streets of Moscow)! Even if we treat the remark as pure rhetoric, it may serve to prepare us for another radical turn in his policy. □

George Packer

UPDATE: HAITI'S AGONY

It's hard to imagine how Port-au-Prince could be a worse place than the city I visited last March, but eight months later reports say that the bodies are turning up in greater numbers than at any time since the September 1991 coup; because of fear and the gasoline blockade the streets are empty of nearly everything except garbage. In the countryside things are far graver. According to a Harvard study, a thousand children nationwide are dying every month as a result of the embargo and the profiteering in food and medicine; experts talk of sub-Saharan-like famine in the northwest.

The offices of the trade unions that last spring held their first tentative meetings since the coup have closed again. Trade unionists and democratic political figures have gone back into full hiding, and one of them, Evans Paul, the mayor of Port-au-Prince, recently escaped at least two assassination attempts. For Haitians there and in exile, the spectacle of Duvalierists reappearing like ghouls on All Souls' Day and the paid thugs called *attachés* celebrating the retreat of the American warship *Harlan County* is the stuff of nightmare.

No one who knows the Haitian military's history of blind brutality and greed should have been surprised by the descent into horror since its betrayal of the Governor's Island accord that was to have brought about the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Yet it's possible to know and still hope. One exile had to cancel his planned return home twice; after the second time he made no further reservations. All the same, he told me that the only surprise for him has been the disarray within the Clinton administration among the White House, the Pentagon, and the CIA, with the latter two sabotaging whatever the president might seek in the way of intervention. "I've always said armed force would be necessary to dislodge the putschists. And it would only take two days. These generals are millionaires—have you ever seen a millionaire on the battlefield? They would take their money and retire to the Dominican Republic."

It's impossible not to indulge the urge to spin hopeful scenarios for relief from watch-

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ing Haiti disintegrate. Perhaps an *attaché* will shoot a foreign diplomat and provide the pretext for some sort of intervention. Perhaps the army will factionalize (it wouldn't be the first time) and one element will seek a rapprochement with the democrats; some of Haiti's elites, apparently having swallowed more than even they can stomach, are beginning to do that. Perhaps the boats will start to leave again, blockade or no blockade, forcing the administration's hand. Perhaps the residents of a provincial town, with nothing left to lose, will overrun an arms depot and uproot the local section chief, exploiting the decentralized command of the army's franchise terrorism, precipitating flight among neighboring chiefs in a domino effect that finally spreads general insurrection to Port-au-Prince. Perhaps Haitians from abroad will try in Cap-Haïtien what failed in the Bay of Pigs, without the dubious help of the CIA. In Brooklyn and Boston this is the talk, even among the politically sophisticated: give us the guns and we'll do it ourselves.

"In Haiti halfway measures don't work," says a human rights expert. "It's always been the politics of all or nothing. And this is Aristide's endgame: with maximum pressure there might be an uprising. He played the negotiation as well as he could, but he knew it wouldn't succeed. After two hundred years you have to disarticulate the Haitian army before it will give up power."

It's hard to see what else poor Haitians have to lose—yet that doesn't make revolt inevitable. From outside the country one can imagine a range of more and less bloody solutions, but what worries one exiled democrat is the sense of dispirit that the violence and isolation have produced inside Haiti. He feels, as he didn't last year, a temporary loss of will among his colleagues back home to engage, analyze, discuss. "However this ends," he told me, "the country will come out of it profoundly handicapped, not just economically but psychologically."

He keeps his own morale alive by traveling to conferences, writing articles, proposing projects for a reconstituted democracy that have generated much enthusiasm among other exiles. "But after the conference, after the publication, I come back to reality, and see what's happening in Haiti today, and have to wonder if it isn't all useless. Every night, around four o'clock, I wake up out of a nightmare, anguished. But I can remember nothing." *(November 1993)* □

Irving Howe Memorial Fund

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Rashi Fein

THE POLITICS OF HEALTH REFORM

An Interim Report

This essay focuses on the basic design of the Clinton administration's health-care-reform policy. It examines how the president's early decision in favor of employment-based private insurance rather than tax-based social insurance led to an unnecessarily complex program. While recognizing that the administration's reforms would provide coverage to millions of Americans who now have no or inadequate insurance and would improve the way health care is financed in the United States, I argue that we would still fall short of the universal and progressive program our nation ought to have.

I will discuss three central questions: What should the goals of reform be? Are the Clinton administration proposals heading in the right direction? What sorts of ideas and political mobilization will it take to push reforms in the right direction? But I must begin with some more general remarks about why the administration developed its complex and complicated program. I will then turn to the consequences that follow from that fundamental choice.

Flaws in the Proposal

I do not believe that the administration opted for managed competition after arraying the various alternative health-care and financing reform programs and carefully examining their political, economic, and health-care costs and benefits. Rather, I believe that the choice—managed competition (and the language used in its presentation)—fit with a set of political and economic preconceptions, attitudes, and biases that are held by the "body politic." In a very real sense this basic choice was influenced by the nature of contemporary politics.

The United States is a nation with a deep (perhaps growing) skepticism about government's ability to achieve stated goals and about the wisdom and honesty of elected representatives and government employees. We fear that government not only has a capacity to "screw things up," but is likely to do so frequently and in big ways. Large parts of the electorate (and an even larger proportion of talk show hosts and their callers) and a significant number of elected representatives express their skepticism and antipathy in a confrontational rhetoric that reduces the probability of negotiated, compromise policies—a rhetoric designed to destroy the opposition even at the cost of having a similar impact on representative democracy.

It is easy to understand that individuals who are convinced that government revenues will be misspent because those who administer the funds cannot be trusted and that, even were there no fraud, graft, or corruption, large sums would be wasted because government programs simply cannot attain their objectives, would be reluctant to shoulder an increased tax burden. That attitude is not dependant on the nobility of purpose for which the funds are sought. Skeptics and cynics will argue that new expenditures can always be financed by taking money from areas where it is being wasted

This article is adapted from a paper presented at a seminar on "The Politics of Health Care Reform," which was part of the program "Future Directions for American Politics and Public Policy" at Harvard University.

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rather than from increased revenues. This attitude toward government colors much of our contemporary political discourse and policy proposal formulation.

Although many among the public at large suspend belief in everything except individualism, for others—particularly elite members of the establishment—prevailing skepticism about government's ability to do good is accompanied by a deep belief in the ability of the competitive market to accomplish that end and to do so automatically. Their economic ideology is a distorted version of Adam Smith's capitalism, without the nuances, qualifications, and wisdom of the master. In accepting the distortions, they ignore a guiding principle of the marketplace: *caveat emptor*.

Other industrial nations, even those with national health insurance or financing systems, also share a capitalist ideology. What makes our politics and our capitalist culture so very different is the potent combination of a deep belief both in capitalism and markets and in individualism. That combination yields a capitalist ideology not tempered by democratic socialism or motivated to search for areas where cooperation can substitute for competition and community for individualism. We *are* different, and those differences make a difference: we do not have a strong (or even a weak) labor or left-of-center party or a united labor movement that has the power to behave as a truly progressive social force or a strong progressive caucus of elected officials.

I do not believe I exaggerate the overall impotence of an *organized* liberal force (in contrast with the considerable contribution made by individuals of liberal persuasion). Nor do I believe I exaggerate the dominant and deep-seated beliefs shared by the elite leadership in the efficacy of competitive markets (and in the creation and strengthening of markets where they do not exist or are not sufficiently strong). What may be exaggerated is the degree to which the public at large, though skeptical of government, automatically accepts market ideology and rejects solutions that expand government's role and responsibilities. Debate at the abstract and rhetorical level may yield one answer, debate about specific public-policy initiatives may yield quite another. Much depends on how the issues are put, indeed, on whether they are put at all. However, the perception held by political leaders is that there is so much mistrust of government and of increased taxation that it is preferable to develop programs that are controlled by the invisible hand of the market rather than to opt for the all-too-visible alternatives developed by "bureaucrats."

I do not mean to suggest that this administration's sole concern in developing its health plan is that it meet the private-sector bias of American political reality as assessed by the elite. Rather I suggest that many in the administration share that assessment and belief. Even as the administration believes in an active role for government, it also believes in a restricted role: to help develop markets that operate under competitive conditions, to assist the most vulnerable among us to enter those markets, and then—insofar as possible—to step aside. Democrats and Republicans are distinguished by their definitions of vulnerability and of adequate assistance, as well as by how completely, having set up the market, they are prepared to step aside. Nevertheless, the centers of both parties do share a belief in and a desire for market solutions.

This view places primary emphasis on government as the institution that structures (economic) incentives so as to encourage individual behavior associated with desired outcomes. It is a restricted view of government and a narrow view of the forces that motivate individual behavior. But it is not an idiosyncratic view. It is the establishment view. More than that, it is the "respectable" view, certainly among economists, but among others as well. Its importance is reinforced by the assumption that public policy will in any case be guided by this view and, therefore, that if one doesn't want to be laughed out of court (or the White House mess) as irrelevant, perhaps naive, one should structure one's ideas within that framework. It is this belief in government as landscape architect, the designer of level playing fields, that defines much of Washington activist politics.

Thus, though the interest groups one encoun-

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ters in the health field are unique to that arena, I believe that the politics of health reform is dominated by something much more important than those groups: and that is the preconceptions I have discussed. As a consequence, the politics of health reform is not unlike the politics of a host of other specific areas. The actors change, but the story line remains the same.

The administration has developed a plan that fits with its biases about the role of competitive markets. This may turn out to be a significant error. By "a significant error," I do not mean merely that the administration has selected an approach that isn't as clear and neat as one that I might favor. Rather, I mean that in opting for this general construct, it was forced to a set of specific details that confound and constrain its proposals. It is not clear that such a program can be enacted. Nor is it clear that, if enacted, it would achieve the requisite goals of universality and expenditure restraint. Furthermore, if the program fails legislatively or operationally, the debate is not likely to have done very much to inform the public of the various options, which would make it easier to mobilize around a "single-payer" approach at a later date.

I cannot imagine that the president is entirely comfortable with the implications of some of the substantive micro details of the health care reform proposal as they have evolved. But the details are the logical consequences of very early macro decisions. These stemmed from the fact that the president was unprepared to advocate moving the billions of dollars now paid by business firms and individuals to insurers and care-delivery organizations in the form of premiums to government or quasi-government structures in the form of taxes. Such a move entailed obvious political difficulties, not unrelated to the fact that in the United States premiums are viewed more favorably than taxes (even though the latter can be adjusted to ability to pay). One certainly could not assume that talk show hosts would state and restate the analytic point that tax increases do not represent health expenditure increases and that as taxes increased premiums would be reduced in equivalent or even greater amounts.

Shifting over $500 billion from premiums to taxes also entailed substantive difficulties: the shift would be accompanied by real dislocations and disruptions. True, every comprehensive reform program shifts dollars and involves some dislocations; one can hardly imagine changing a trillion-dollar industry in basic ways and leaving everyone and everything in place. Yet, it is the case that the shift from premiums to taxes would have entailed a particular difficulty: it would have had significant unfavorable impacts on the health insurance industry and its employees. Candidate Clinton's health-reform rhetoric included slashing attacks on health insurers (attacks with which Americans identified); President Clinton was forced to wrestle with the need to have someone collect the requisite funds. If not government, then who other than insurance companies? If not taxes, then what else but premiums?

Retaining insurance companies in order to promote competition and avoid large tax *shifts* leads to a number of unfavorable consequences. First is the fact that the very considerable administrative savings associated with a non-employment related tax-based social insurance system are no longer generated. In his August 16, 1993 address to the National Governor's Association, the president recognized that this was the case, but tried to put a positive spin on the loss of the potential efficiency gains. He argued that a single-payer system (which, he said "would have the least administrative cost") "would be significantly dislocating in the sense that overnight, in a nation this size, you'd have all the people who are in the insurance business out of it . . . " Perhaps it is not an entirely unreasonable position for the leader of a nation whose military sector is shrinking and whose economy is not yet vigorously "growing" jobs to eschew the quest for efficiency and to view health sector inefficiencies as assets. Not unreasonable, but certainly not good policy.

Of course, it is possible to develop and implement standard billing and payment systems that produce *some* administrative savings. The New York State Department of Health proposed just that in its UNY*Care program, which retained multiple insurers, yet arranged

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payment by a single payer. Nevertheless, the administrative savings achieved thereby would be much less than in a social insurance program that eliminated the underwriting function and the associated marketing expenses of insurance companies and that might eliminate their intermediary fiscal responsibilities. In turn, since nonexistent savings cannot be used to finance additional care for today's un- and under-insured, increased tax revenues are required. Thus, the problem of taxation has not been avoided: we need new taxes because we cannot rely on replacing, as the president put it, "over $500 billion in private insurance premiums, with *nearly that much in new taxes*" [emphasis added]. It is a tribute to the president's intellectual honesty that he notes that single-payer taxes would be *less* than today's premiums. One wonders what might have been if that point had become the centerpiece of an educational campaign for a single-payer proposal building on something the American people are already familiar with, such as an expanded and improved Medicare system for all.

A second problem stems from the fact that in avoiding a shift to taxation, the administration continues the linkage between insurance and employment and places primary reliance on employer funding. Increasingly, Congress has been asked to rely on employers to fund social programs (for example, family leave, child care, health insurance) that proponents find meritorious, but that cannot be paid for collectively out of existing tax revenues. Yesterday's alchemists who sought to change base metals into gold have been replaced by today's legislators who want to create the free lunch: that is, social programs that are valuable and (presumably) open to all, but which (apparently) don't have to be paid for.

Even so, since not all employers can bear the burden of funding health insurance, systems that subsidize and shelter low-wage employees and low-profit employers—and that need public funds—have to be developed. With mistrust rampant, even the promise of such subsidies (for only a limited period) may not be sufficient to generate political support for the program. It is ironic that the administration is forced to choose between employer burdens that will cost jobs and subsidies requiring the tax increases it sought to avoid. Nevertheless, even those criticisms pale against the major issue: employment-linked and funded programs are not and cannot be models of universality, progressivity, and equity.

Unfortunately, these are not the only consequences of the basic structural decision. Without administrative savings and with the need for new taxes, the administration was forced to emphasize (not merely favor and rely upon) delivery-system reform (managed care and managed competition) as cost-saving mechanisms. Furthermore, since employers who do not provide health insurance at the present time (often inadequately defined as "small business") were opposed to reforms that imposed new financial burdens, and since it was clear that desired cost-saving system reforms could not be developed rapidly, the administration was forced to recommend a long phase-in period and the provision of employer subsidies financed out of the (presumed) future savings in existing federal health programs. These emphases are not entirely positive: they create additional difficulties.

The first is that the program, now so comprehensive that it is called upon to reform the delivery as well as the financing of care, combines changes requiring very different time frames. Health-financing reform is something that can be and, in my view, should have been done quickly. In contrast, health-care-delivery reform is a long-range and continuing endeavor. It takes far less time to change the flow of dollars and payment criteria than substantially to increase the proportion of primary care physicians; restructure the number and type of residency training programs; build new HMOs and expand existing ones; develop the quality measures that managed competition requires; alter long-standing practice criteria, standards, and patterns; close hospital beds and reduce duplication in programs; and build new regional structures to rationalize and share institutional responsibilities.

These delivery-system changes must be

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implemented over a long period of time in order to reduce inevitable dislocations that would affect patient care, teaching, and research, but also in order that providers, patients, and prospective patients understand and accept the various changes. In seeking to present delivery-system reform in tandem with financing reform, the administration has hurt its cause. The proposal has become overly complex (how many Americans understood the early Health Insurance Purchasing Cooperatives, the later Alliances, or even the broad outlines of managed competition?) and appears threatening. Many who could accept changes in the flow of dollars fear the unfavorable impacts they believe they would encounter in the delivery of care, in relationships with physicians, even in their opportunities to choose their own physicians.

The administration was forced to undertake too much because of the logic of its earlier decisions. It did not stumble into its chosen structure by inadvertence: it embraced the concept of managed competition because it believes in the economic theory on which the presumed benefits rest. Nevertheless, one can sympathize. After all, the desirability of "comprehensive reform" was the (somewhat unclear) message sent by the polls and the (very clear) message sent by the academic community. Aware that the various actors in the existing system could find ways to circumvent partial "solutions," and that "the health-care system is akin to a balloon: if you press at one point, it will pop out somewhere else," health-care analysts have strongly recommended general solutions.

Divorced from the need to consider questions of acceptability, legislative timetables, and implementability, it is easy for academicians to demonstrate that it is advantageous, indeed, necessary to tackle everything. This message also resonated within that part of the body politic that preferred inaction: since one *couldn't* know, and do everything and since there was no point in doing only some things, there was an intellectual basis for doing nothing. One can certainly imagine that if the administration had called for rapid changes in health-financing arrangements without a call for equally rapid delivery-system changes, many health-care analysts would have argued that it hadn't done its analytic homework.

The outcome is a program that is not readily understood. In 1965, Senator Clinton Anderson, then leading the legislative battle for Medicare, explained that Medicare would be "the equivalent of putting a Blue Cross card into the pocketbook or wallet of every elderly American." The public could understand, identify with, and organize around this succinct explanation. There is no equivalent description of today's proposal. Nor is it clear that the administration will be able to find such a description. It will be difficult to overcome the fears of the unknown and unexplainable, to get people to support that which they cannot understand. Since there is little that is intuitive about the proposal, opponents will be able to sow confusion and benefit from its presence.

Whatever the "packaging" difficulties, the substantive implications of the administration's approach are of even greater concern: specifically, the call for a lengthy phase-in period and the emphasis on the need to generate dollar savings that can be set aside to help pay for insurance and care for the uninsured and for those who have fewer benefits than the standard benefit package will call for. Earlier statements had helped allay the fear that, as in the past, universal coverage would be held hostage to the success of cost-containment efforts. Many were heartened by the administration's apparent recognition that, except for temporary price controls, cost-containment efforts can be effective only if they are joined with measures to make insurance coverage more universally available. We were pleased that the un- and underinsured would not be told to wait for better times or, as the words of the old labor ballad put it: "Work and pray, live on hay; You'll get pie in the sky when you die."

But that has changed. Appropriately concerned about the plan's economic impact on small business and the political impact of business opposition, the president has referred to the need for a payroll-related cap on mandated contributions—with subsidies to

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make up the difference between the cost of insurance and the premium payments by firms. Thus, with a need for new dollar resources, an inability to find them within existing revenues or to raise them in sufficient amounts through additional taxes, there is a political logic to stretching the phase-in period and to calling for cost containment to precede enrollment expansion. Political and operational logic, regrettably, are not synonymous. At the minimum, the constraints mean that the achievement of universality and equity are delayed; at the maximum, they make it unlikely that the new health reform will ever be fully implemented.

The latter is the case for a number of reasons. Even if managed competition were an effective long-run cost-containment strategy, expenditure savings would prove insufficient in the short run: budget structures are not easily developed; HMOs cannot expand rapidly while maintaining quality; absent universality, cost-shifting patterns can continue; and there are limits to the amount that can be found in our continuing return to the (bottomless?!) Medicare/Medicaid savings well. Furthermore, under a phasing timetable, program expansion will become hostage to deficit reduction, and economic and political developments not directly related to health care. In turn this will provide ample opportunity to visit and revisit the reform package and to delay full implementation.

Nor is the problem merely one of phasing in the various predetermined parts. It is problematic whether a program with a long phase-in period can be enacted at all since the public may not readily mobilize in support of something that will take effect in the distant future. Perhaps of even greater significance is the opportunity provided for opponents to argue that phasing does not require enactment of the full program at one time, that at most we should enact the first step and see how it works before debating the next. The danger is not merely that battles would have to be fought again and again and that the nation's span of attention may be insufficient. Rather, it is that as each phase is implemented, the constituencies that would be affected by the remaining phases shrink and their voice grows weaker. There is a real danger that we would not remember the most vulnerable (and the most costly) individuals and families and would postpone indefinitely the enactment and implementation of the last phases.

The definition of "phasing" (whether it describes a process of enactment or implementation) has always been a source of contention. Under the administration's proposal, it would remain so. The logic of "dipping your toes in the water" before deciding how much further to move could prevail over the admonition attributed to Winston Churchill that one should not leap over a chasm in two steps.

Thus, although the tactic of phasing has a certain appeal, it may well make the enactment battle much harder. Still, one would be tempted to defer to the administration's political judgment if one believed that this approach had been selected because it was a desirable political strategy in achieving health reform. I do not believe that is the case. Regrettably, the administration has been pushed to the step-by-step approach because of its much earlier choice of an employer-mandated approach and the difficulties engendered in relation to financing and cost containment.

While I have been critical of the administration's approach, my argument would be incomplete and less than fair if I did not make clear that within the basic structure of managed competition as a way to organize the delivery system and employer mandates as a way to finance insurance—I believe it is useful to separate these two—there still remain many opportunities to amend and improve the program. The administration is enamored of managed competition as a strategy, but is not so captivated that it is willing to place exclusive reliance on the market to contain costs. Thus, it supports caps, limits, and global budgets. We should encourage it to continue to do so.

Choices remain. Some of them are better, some of them are worse; some of them promote universality and equity, some of them contribute to the fragmentation of the population and to differences in access to care. I write before

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the administration has made public the full structure of its plan. Nonetheless, it seems clear that, though overly complex, health care financing *would* be improved were the anticipated proposals adopted (I am much less certain about the short-run impact on delivery of quality health care). That, however, is not a sufficiently high standard to which to aspire. The administration *could* have done better. It *would* have done better had it been less captivated by the presumed virtues of private-sector competition in financing care and less fearful of expanding social-insurance funding. There is much that we can commend; there is also much that we should regret.

Goals of Reform

I believe that health-care reform should be structured to achieve two broad goals. We should seek to develop a system in which (1) the allocation of financial and real resources to health care would be consistent with our collective perception of the benefits that care would yield and the alternative benefits that would be generated were those resources used in other ways; and (2) the health care resources so budgeted would be distributed equitably in relation to individual medical needs and the benefits and costs of care rather than in relation to individual income, wealth, power, or status. Thus, our goals involve macro (how large the pie) as well as micro (how the pie is divided) policy. The one without the other is insufficient.

These twin goals may appear to be merely another (and more complex) way of stating the oft-repeated definition of the problems that beset us: health-care expenditures are rising rapidly and represent too high a proportion of our Gross Domestic Product; perhaps forty million Americans are without any health insurance protection (and millions more have inadequate coverage). I believe the goals are more than that. They stress collective decisions and imply the need for budgets; they stress the allocation of resources and, thus, emphasize access rather than insurance. They imply the need for a structure that can determine the citizenry's perceptions, translate them into a budgeting process, and reach necessary collective decisions. That structure need not be invented. It already exists and operates at various levels. It is called government.

Attempts to contain health expenditures must be based on predetermined budgets rather than on price competition. The latter can too easily translate into market segmentation, reductions in quality, and allocations that reflect our grossly unequal distribution of income. I also believe that, given the unequal distribution of socioeconomic status and of health-care needs, the implementation of a universal health insurance program is necessary but not sufficient. An emphasis on access reminds us of the nonfinancial barriers to care, of the need to act on the supply side of the equation, to mount outreach programs, to expand community health centers, and to be concerned with the non-medical determinants of health.

This is not the occasion on which to present the details of a program that would bring us closer to the two goals I have referred to. Nevertheless, there are three matters that should be noted. The first is the importance of defining the term "universal" to mean "within the same program." I distinguish that meaning from the one that we have heard about under programs of "play or pay" and employer mandates, where universal often seems to mean "everyone is insured, albeit in different ways, and insurance is financed, albeit from different public and private sources." I see little reason to be optimistic that fragmentation of insurance and financing provides us with a socially stable solution. Over time, disparities in insurance and in care are likely to grow.

The second matter—implied by my comments about universality—is the importance of breaking the link between insurance and employment. There is no logical reason (I do not deny the importance of history or politics) to continue to tie the availability of insurance or its financing to work. Given that individuals enter and leave the labor force, work sometimes and at other times are unemployed, change employers and geographic locations, live in families with different numbers of

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earners, and that payrolls and profits of employers and wages of employees vary greatly, linkage complicates rather than simplifies the availability of insurance. It makes it much more difficult to build substantial progressivity into insurance financing and adds inefficiency to the total system. The very complexity in the administration's program—which comes from trying to do through employer premiums what should be done through taxes—is a persuasive argument for a social insurance program.

The third matter relates to the role of states in a universal health insurance program. Although I see an important role for states in administration (on matters such as health-care budgets; negotiating and bargaining with providers; review of quality-assurance programs; setting of health-care priorities that reflect the culture, traditions, and needs of particular population groups), that does not imply that states "can do it alone." There must at least be major federal financing and a set of federal performance standards. Only then can we make certain that the United States has a truly universal program covering all residents.

It would be preferable to develop a full scale *federal* social insurance program. If, however, the administration cannot be dissuaded from mandating employers to provide insurance, it should offer states an option to move to a tax-based program. Though few of them would be likely to exercise that option at this time, some might do so. In any case, the availability of a state option would make it easier to move in that direction at some later date, since the shift would not have to occur for the entire nation at the same time.

It should be clear, however, that in providing freedom to states, I am not suggesting that it is sufficient simply to describe them as our experimental laboratories and let it go at that. We need to make certain that the laboratories are working toward the same goal, trying to answer the same question, adhering to a prescribed set of ethical standards. We are also required to make a commitment to evaluate and learn from the experiments and to utilize the information thus gathered to improve programs. The administration shares some of these views. Yet, I fear that others who call upon the states to be our laboratories do so in an effort to delay the implementation of a national program rather than because they believe in the experimental method.

Mobilizing Political Will

What sorts of ideas and political mobilization will it take to push reform in the right direction? I claim no expertise on such matters. I fear that intuition is not a substitute for experience and know that introspection is not a particularly powerful research technique.

I do have a (readily understandable) bias in favor of a full articulation of the issues and of debate and public involvement—in a word, of education. In my judgment, if that education is to take place, members of the academy will have to alter their behavior. In the health-care debate too many of us have been tempted to play at being politicians, to make political judgments about feasibility and to temper our recommendations to make them fit this or that view of political reality. We have helped constrain the debate by accepting the definition of the world as it is conventionally believed to be instead of describing the world that we hope might be (and perhaps, without our knowing it, is).

The danger is obvious. Our judgments about feasibility might be wrong. That is especially the case now that economists stand near the center of health care decision making. The training and education of economists predisposes us to think in terms of *marginal* change and continuity. Marginalism becomes more than an analytic technique; it becomes a pattern of thought, even a guide to action. Nor do economists' experiences *as economists* equip us with relevant expertise on issues of political feasibility. If we (and others in the academy) emphasize the doable and fail to provide a rich discussion of other possibilities, ruling them out on the grounds that, as the president put it in dismissing the Canadian single-payer option: "I don't think that is going to happen," we do not help equip the citizenry to debate the full range of issues. Our role is not that of the

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president or of our elected representatives. Something different is expected of us.

Because of those expectations, we will confuse our various audiences if we stop being professors and become politicians. Our students (I use the broadest definition) cannot sort out our advice. They do not know which role we play. Worse than that, they may conclude that our incomplete analysis of an option (for example, a program such as an improved Medicare for all) stems from the fact that the option is seriously flawed. We reject it because we believe it isn't politically feasible, and it becomes just that.

There is no formula to guide our behavior when we are called upon to balance our role as educators and our desire to be "realistic." Each of us will make his or her own judgment in particular situations. Perhaps there will be sufficiently diverse individual behaviors to protect the body politic from the dangers I speak of. Yet, I believe that in the case of health reform (especially in relation to programs that call for severing the link between employment and insurance), the academy has leaned in one direction and has provided less than the requisite information. Too many professors have stated privately that a single-payer approach would be the "best way to go," but have misled the public by not sharing that conclusion and its reasons. We have helped constrain the breadth of the debate. Surely, it is reasonable to suggest that the first step in political mobilization in support of an idea should be a defense of the idea itself.

My final comment on political mobilization stems from the observation that many who despair that sensible health reform will be soon enacted feel that we are weak, and believe, as a colleague once put it: "We have a platoon when what we need is an army." We see ourselves this way in part because we have permitted others, especially in recent years, to define health reform as an economic policy issue rather than as an issue in social policy. Of course, our existing trillion-dollar health system has important economic impacts, and comprehensive health reform will have important economic ramifications. Nevertheless, we will remain a mere platoon if we accept that narrow economic definition.

Health care policy is part of social policy. Our potential allies in the quest for health reform are those who are concerned about our social condition, about homelessness, hunger and malnutrition, cities infested with crime and drugs, the quality and availability of good education, racism and discrimination, and about that most basic of matters: America's radically unequal income distribution. In these and other areas there are platoons akin to ours whose members search for ways to mobilize so that they, too, can grow to battalion and regiment size, expand into divisions, become an army. That can happen, but only if we understand that there is a more comprehensive agenda than the one each group would independently pursue.

Unless health reform is defined in broadest terms, we will achieve little. Perhaps we will enact a piece of legislation, even a piece of "good" legislation. Yet who among us believes that we will really improve the health of the citizenry if we do not deal with the conditions of life? Who among us believes that we can really achieve an equitable distribution of health care and of financing in the presence of the most unequal distribution of income among industrial societies? Who among us believes that a deficit-ridden public sector can compete with a rich private sector unless we choose a collective response to human needs?

The platoon must and can grow into an army. I believe that will occur when we recognize that health care reform does depend upon a concern about costs and the misallocation of America's resources, but that it also depends upon whether enough of us are prepared to work at translating concepts of decency, humaneness, cooperation, universality, and justice into policies that would protect all members of the American family. When—I do not write "if"—enough of us understand that what we are about is trying to redefine the kind of society we live in, the health care platoon and all the other platoons will discover each other and will find that together they are an army. □

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Anna Coote

WHAT THATCHER DID TO BRITISH HEALTH CARE

Two-year-old Rhys Daniels suffers from a rare genetic disorder that leads to blindness and dementia. He hit the headlines when he was denied life-saving treatment earlier this year because of the closure of a bone-marrow transplant unit at a London hospital. The boy's father challenged the decision in the High Court but failed. The British public has become accustomed to the idea that its National Health Service (NHS) is "in crisis." Most weeks there are stories in the media about people dying because their operations have been delayed; or doctors having to make "tough choices" about allocating resources; or vast sums of money disappearing into black holes created by inept managers; or ambulances failing to respond to emergency calls; or patients being kept in the dark about their health or how long they will have to wait for treatment. Even a prime-time television drama series, *Peak Practice*, features doctors in rural middle-England tussling heroically with unfamiliar budgeting and managerial regimes.

Most, though not all, of the current crisis has emerged from a radical program of reforms introduced by Conservative politicians anxious to curb public expenditure. This, of course, is an anxiety shared by most Western governments in the 1990s. But the United Kingdom's crisis has a special character because of the history of its National Health Service. Universal and free to all who need it, the service has been in place for nearly half a century, since it was introduced as part of the postwar welfare state by Clement Attlee's Labour government. It is paid for out of taxes. For forty years, there were no conspicuous cases of sick people like Rhys Daniels being excluded from essential care. Even now, doctors' and hospital bills are not spiraling upward as in the United States. And individual care plans have not been distorted by an industry trying to maximize profits.

So why the crisis? From the late seventies onward there has been a growing unease about the public sector, and inevitably some of this has rubbed off on the health service. Large, monolithic state-owned bureaucracies have become increasingly vulnerable to criticism that they are inefficient and waste public money and that they serve the interests of bureaucrats more than those of the customers.

In the 1980s, Margaret Thatcher's government delivered a powerful message: free the market, roll back the state, cut taxes, and let individuals look after themselves. Public utilities were privatized and central government hacked away at the powers of local government.

Thatcher avowed at election time that the NHS was safe in her hands. But when she needed an eye operation she nipped into a private clinic, explaining afterward that she wanted to be able to choose when and where to have the treatment. (Didn't we all?) Public enthusiasm for the principle of a national health service remained quite passionate. But public confidence in the nature of the organization was severely shaken.

Last but not least, the cost of health care was rising while public resources were shrinking, thanks to expensive new medical techniques, an aging population, and (by the late 1980s) a deepening recession. Between 1979 and 1989, public spending on health grew in real terms by an average of 2.71 percent per year. There were

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compelling economic reasons to try to pummel the NHS into a more cost-effective shape.

The United Kingdom was in fact spending a far smaller proportion of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) on health care in 1987 than the United States (6.1 percent compared with 11.2 percent) and only slightly more on public health care (5.3 percent compared with 4.6 percent in the U.S.). Nevertheless, the Thatcherite Tories, enthralled by the Reaganites, turned to the United States for inspiration. They found Alain Enthoven, business professor at Stanford University (and today a leading proponent of "managed competition" in U.S. Health policy), who in 1985 had advocated the introduction of an "internal market" to the health service. Toward the end of Margaret Thatcher's final term of government, in 1990, the NHS and Community Care Act was passed by Parliament; and the reforms introduced over the next three years.

Planners and deliverers of health care, previously part of one big happy family, were separated and made to deal with each other on contractual terms, as customers and suppliers in a quasi-marketplace. Health authorities, which used to be responsible for planning and administering health services, became purchasers of care, entering into contracts with suppliers of care (hospitals, community health services, local doctors, and so on). General practitioners (GPs) were encouraged to become "fund-holders": this means they are given some control over their own budgets; they become independent purchasers of hospital and other specialist services for their patients, rather than using the contracts issued by health authorities. Hospitals are encouraged to compete with each other for contracts from health authorities and GPs; with the money they earn from contracts, they employ or subcontract for the services they require to carry out the work, on whatever terms they can negotiate.

The reforms have triggered a managerial revolution. Hospitals are no longer run as fiefdoms of senior doctors and surgeons ("consultants"); now they have managers and accountants crawling all over them, issuing "mission statements," making sure they meet the terms of their contracts, looking for new business, balancing budgets, and so forth. Fund-holding GPs, for their part, are more powerful than ever before. Traditionally, they have been low in the pecking order—humble yeomen who must defer to the rich and powerful consultant aristocracy. Now, with their new muscle in the marketplace, they are beginning to find the consultants deferring to them. This is supposed to be good for patients, whose GPs act on their behalf and (allegedly) in their interests.

In some corners of this quasi-marketplace, the new rules may have unleashed previously untapped energies. Freed from the old bureaucratic constraints, yet disciplined by new budgetary ones, some managers and professionals may have begun to think more creatively about how to respond to patients' needs. Patients are more often asked what they think of the way they have been treated. Complaints procedures are being polished up. There is even talk at government level of admitting some "alternative" therapies to the charmed circle of clinical respectability. All this is probably for the good. But some serious problems have remained unresolved.

Promotion and Prevention

The NHS remains a huge machine, spending many billions and employing many battalions. It dominates policy discussion and policy making. Entrusting doctors, nurses and health managers with the job of enhancing the nation's health is rather like giving the job of preventing burglary to glaziers and locksmiths (or indeed, to the police). They can produce thicker glass and stronger locks, and try to catch the burglars. We need them for this; we can consult their expertise; but their business depends, to a large extent, on a continuing demand for new windows and new locks, and a continuing supply of burglaries to investigate. We therefore should not expect them to be the best people to tackle the root causes of theft. It's the same with Health Service personnel. However well-intentioned they might be, however committed to making people better, their jobs depend on people being sick.

The government's NHS reforms have failed to turn around the priorities of policy making,

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to focus on the promotion of good health. The reformers can accommodate the notion of prevention as a *clinical* activity (vaccinations, body-scanners, and so on). But that is not the main business of prevention, which must be concerned with the environment (pollution, working conditions, road safety, urban planning, and so on), with human behavior (smoking, diet, exercise, hygiene, safe sex), and, most important of all, with social and economic relations. There is ample evidence that income and social status are the main determinants of health. In Britain, babies in the poorest families are twice as likely to die as babies in the wealthiest. Furthermore, international comparisons suggest that life expectancy is affected by relative as well as by absolute income levels. In other words, the gap between rich and poor within one country will affect that entire population's life expectancy: it will be higher where income distribution is more egalitarian and lower where it is less so. In the United Kingdom and the United States, life expectancy has slipped as the gap between rich and poor has widened.

In the reformed NHS, the planning function (working out the health needs of the population and how to meet them) has been separated from the provision of health care. This might have been a useful move, had planning not been locked into a hazardous embrace with the function of *purchasing* health care. So the health authorities, who are both planners and purchasers, have their minds fixed upon shopping for hospital and GP services, not upon planning or health gain. That would require a far more imaginative and courageous approach. At a local level, health planners would need to work closely with local government, so that all aspects of local planning, on environment, education, and services, were geared toward health. But health authorities are constitutionally quite separate and different from local authorities; they are unelected and they even have different boundaries. The degree of cooperation between the two depends in each locality upon the strength of political will to pursue a cooperative approach against the odds.

At the national level, a government that seriously intends to improve the nation's health would have to acknowledge that this depends far more on its economic policies than on its health service reforms. It would have to resume responsibility for economic and social planning, to promote a more equal distribution of income. But that would be anathema to the antistatist tendencies in John Major's party.

Equity and Choice

In the long run a successfully coordinated health policy might reduce claims on the health service; increasingly these would be concentrated among older people and among those with chronic and progressive illnesses. But that is a highly optimistic view and it shouldn't in any case divert attention from problems that persist within the service itself.

The principle on which the NHS was founded, and which still underpins most health care systems in Europe, is that there should be equitable deployment of available resources for the benefit of the whole population: equal access to available care and equal quality of care for all. The health service reforms must be judged by those standards.

The ideology behind the reforms has been openly hostile to equality. Market and Choice were the horses backed by the Tories; Equality came in a poor third at best. One of the main boasts of the NHS reforms has been that more competition between service providers will increase the "customer's" power to choose. In the new quasi-market, the newly independent GPs have begun to consider which patients make better business. Since they get an annual fee for each individual on their register, it doesn't take a genius to work out that fit, middle-class people will be less of a liability than those who are poor or chronically sick or disabled.

Some unscrupulous doctors have refused to admit patients from certain "problem" housing areas: *they* are well aware of the correlation between social deprivation and ill-health. Those whom they reject must seek another doctor. GPs who are not independent fund-holders are less likely to turn them down, because they don't have to think or behave like entrepreneurs. These "old-fashioned" GPs are the poor relations of primary health care: they tend to operate alone rather than in multimember practices; they may

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offer a more limited service; they lack the clout of the fund-holders to bargain with consultants or to get the best and quickest treatment.

So much for choice. The power to choose is unevenly distributed—not only among individual patients but also among doctors. The balance of power is further distorted by an information gap. Members of the public have no way of finding out whether one doctor kills more patients than another, or even whether one doctor works more to the satisfaction of patients than another. This information is not collected—so health care purchasers are almost as much in the dark as the public. Patients have no idea which drugs have which side effects, unless a doctor cares to tell them; they know nothing about the past effectiveness of any particular drug. Some of this information is known to health care purchasers but withheld from the public.

All the reforms of the NHS have taken place against a background of steady decline. Patients witness it daily: paint peeling off hospital walls; water dripping through leaking roofs; soiled laundry left in piles because there are not enough staff to collect it promptly; casualty patients lined up on trolleys unattended, waiting for an empty bed. "A third world experience" is how one friend of mine described her eight-hour wait on a trolley in the corridor of a south London hospital casualty unit. She had meningitis. More and more people are coming to the view that their only hope of ensuring satisfactory health care is to take out private insurance.

This summer (June 1993) Michael Heseltine, flamboyant cabinet minister and failed contender for the Thatcher succession, had a heart attack in a Venice restaurant. When he returned to England he went straight into a private clinic. His face appeared on the front of every newspaper, grinning cheerily. No one batted an eyelid, although there had been quite an outcry when Thatcher "went private" a few years ago. It is now widely held that money can buy better health care. So much for "equal quality of care for all."

Scarcity and Decision Making

There is little evidence that the reforms have helped to check rising costs of health care. The reorganization itself has been expensive, and the new market ethos has brought new opportunities to waste money. A Regional Health Authority in the Midlands spent £4 million on consultancy fees, including the rent of houses in London, the hire of aircraft, and lavish entertainment. The consultants had been hired to advise the authority on cost cutting. Mismanaged computer contracts by another health authority in southwest England led to spectacular losses of public money—up to £63 million, according to the newspapers that investigated the scandal.

While costs continue to rise, while claims on the service increase, and while the government remains committed to curbing public expenditure, something's got to give. Decisions have to be made about how to ration scarce resources. In the old days, such decisions would have been taken, for better or worse, by senior doctors behind closed doors.

Now the managers are on to the case. They, too, take decisions behind closed doors. The saving grace is that there is less public deference toward managers, less blind faith. The epidemic of media scandals about the NHS is an expression of this changing mood, and the scandals in turn lend momentum to the change.

The government has, for complex reasons, encouraged such truculence. In 1991 it issued a Patient's Charter, declaring that all citizens had ten specific National Health Service Rights. They include a right to be registered with a GP and a right to receive treatment within two years of being placed on a waiting list. Depending on your point of view, this is a valiant attempt to empower the public or a neat exercise in public relations to camouflage a deteriorating service. The "rights" are largely a sham—you can't enforce them, you can only complain if they are not upheld and receive a "full and prompt reply." But the Patient's Charter, which is part of a broader Citizen's Charter issued by the prime minister, has helped put the idea into people's heads that they *should* have more power and more say in decisions about the health service, even though they do not.

So rationing, which might have passed unnoticed in a previous era, is now, perhaps mercifully, a hot potato. Virginia Bottomley,

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secretary of state for health, has admitted that rationing is inevitable, but has passed the buck to health authorities and health service staff to decide how to do it? How, indeed? Politicians, managers, and health "experts" have been shuttling over to Oregon and returning unenlightened. A team at York University has suggested that rationing be guided by a computerized formula, based on the length and quality of life (or "qalys") that can be anticipated as a result of a clinical intervention. The danger of this approach is that it can obscure highly contentious social and ethical questions under the guise of scientific precision.

In fact, there is no forum for public debate. The health service is a huge and rampant spender of public funds; it is part of the bedrock of British democracy, in that it helps (or should help) to guarantee a basic human right. Yet it is almost entirely unaccountable. Health authorities are appointed, not elected.

Health authorities and hospital trusts are obliged to "consult" the public as part of their decision-making process, but consultation can be more or less meaningful, depending on who is consulted and how. Power to determine these points remains in the hands of the consulting bodies. Some hospitals and authorities genuinely want to render themselves accountable to their local communities, but are hard-pressed to work out how to do this in an institutional framework geared to avoid any meaningful dialogue. If they want to keep mum about what they are doing, they can usually get away with it.

The more health care providers are involved in rationing what is supposed to be a universal service, in order to meet their new contractual obligations, the more they are going to want to do so in secret. One of the least controversial and easily camouflaged forms of rationing is to hold patients in lines. The government's Patient's Charter promises treatment "no later than two years from the day when your consultant places you on a waiting list." But consultants can delay the moment when a patient's name goes on to the list. In February it came to light that the Department of Health had ordered hospitals not to tell patients how long they would have to wait for their operations. One hospital wrote to consultants explaining: "We have been asked by the NHS Management Executive and [health] regions not to involve patients in discussions about contractual issues. . . . Patients should therefore never be given information about [health] districts and contracting, and GPs should only be given information on these grounds where absolutely necessary."

A recent survey of senior executives in fifty hospitals across the country suggested there was less sharing of information between hospitals than in the past. Only one in ten said information systems were adequate for their needs. Indeed, the picture was altogether bleak. Seventy percent said community relations had remained the same or worsened since the reforms and one third said staff morale had deteriorated. Nearly 80 percent said they did not believe the NHS objective of creating a quasi-market within the NHS was being achieved.

Undoubtedly it would help if the Government were prepared to raise taxes and put more money into the Health Service. But that is not going to solve the more serious problems that beset health policy in the United Kingdom. A service that is supposed to be universal and that spends such large amounts of taxpayers' money must be made more accountable to the public. But even more important is the ordering of priorities. A government survey published in July this year revealed that almost 90 percent of adults in England have one or more of the four main risk factors for heart disease and stroke: high blood pressure, raised cholesterol, smoking, and lack of physical activity. Yet the government has steadfastly resisted pressure to ban tobacco advertising or to put serious money into health education. The *health care* cart has been put before the *health policy* horse. Worse than that, the NHS trailer, which ought to be behind the cart, has been put before the cart and the horse.

This sorry arrangement is failing quite miserably to proceed along the road. □

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David Brody

THE FUTURE OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The title of this article—"The Future of the Labor Movement in Historical Perspective"—is meant only half in jest. No one understands better than the historian that the future is beyond knowing, that there are no laws of history or cycles that can be plotted out into the future. But that does not mean history is irrelevant. Powerful continuities connect past and present, and to know what they are is to have guideposts in times of trouble and confusion.

No reader has to be told that this is a time of troubles for the labor movement. In 1975 union membership stood at an all-time high of 22 million. That translated into a union density in the nonagricultural sector of 28.9 percent, down only slightly from the peak of 32.3 percent in 1953. Since then, unions have lost four million members, and union density has declined below 16 percent. If we count only private employment, the labor movement is perilously close to where it was before the New Deal.

In the AFL-CIO president's view, this actually constitutes an achievement. "We've maintained our membership in the most extraordinary combination of adverse circumstances," says Lane Kirkland, by which he doubtless means the hostile politics of the Reagan era, the militant anti-unionism of American industry in those years, and, most of all, the fiercely competitive markets and sweeping restructuring of enterprise that have undercut the economic grounding of collective bargaining in America. Underlying the problems of the labor movement is the more fundamental crisis of a working class beset by declining real income and disappearing jobs. This is a new situation for a society that has known only sustained economic growth, and hence probably beyond the historian's grasp. But the institutional issue—the question of the labor movement under severe stress—seems more tractable, with more from the past to guide us. This is not the first time of troubles for the labor movement, and its defeats and revivals are themes about which the historian ought to have something to say.

Among my fellow labor historians, it is unfashionable to invoke the name of Selig Perlman, whose *A Theory of the Labor Movement* (1928) expounds the trade-union vision of Samuel Gompers. I would not want to defend Perlman's particular formulations, but in two ways Perlman's book still serves us well—first, by insisting on some organic link between labor movements and the working classes they serve and, second, by identifying the specific characteristics that this linkage has produced in the American movement. Perlman uses the term "job-consciousness," and I am content with it. By Perlman's definition, job-conscious unionism pushed the limits in two ways: first, in advancing the job interests of workers and second, in placing the union at the center of that effort.

Did Perlman capture what unions do in

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America? Consider one of the thorniest bargaining problems facing unions today—the escalating costs of health-care coverage. This is not a collective-bargaining problem for other labor movements, not even Canada's. Why should it be so in the United States? The easy answer is of course that the United States lacks a national health insurance system. (Even if we get one under the Clinton administration, the cornerstone will still be the employment coverage that became our substitute for national insurance.) There was a time, in the waning years of the New Deal and during World War II, when national health insurance was actively debated in this country; by then medical care, like old age and unemployment, had become elevated in the minds of Americans into a basic security claim. Both wings of the labor movement—AFL and CIO—were robust advocates of national health insurance. A colleague and former student of mine who has been studying this subject, Alan Derickson, has been struck by an apparent anomaly: that it was the "conservative" AFL, not the CIO, that stuck by national health insurance as its star waned in the postwar reaction signaled by the Republican congressional successes of 1946. The reason was that the AFL craft unions had a harder time figuring out how medical benefits might be incorporated into their collective-bargaining agreements. National corporations like General Motors and United States Steel had already instituted group insurance, and for the CIO unions it was mainly a question of forcing these benefits into the bargaining arena—not an easy matter given the importance employers still attached to their welfarist programs, but one effectively accomplished once the courts ruled that benefits were mandatory bargaining issues and the Steelworkers union took a tough stand in the 1949 strike.

From this complicated story we can draw two kinds of conclusions. First, as to the outcome: medical benefits became almost universally a major component of modern collective bargaining, and as such are emblematic of the maximalist tendencies of our job-conscious brand of trade unionism. Second, as to why we got that outcome: in this instance, most directly, it was due to the vacuum created by government inaction. That the labor movement fought so hard on behalf of national health insurance actually marked something of a break from a tradition going back to Samuel Gompers, who had always argued that it was the unions, not the state, that should protect the American worker. The underlying job-conscious logic, however, had not gone away. After all, the national corporations already were providing for their employees through group insurance. The industrial unions could have left the matter there. That they did not do so stemmed at least partly from the ingrained logic that instructed American unions to maximize what they did for their members. It is no accident that collective bargaining in America—and not elsewhere—is burdened by the issue of medical insurance.

The larger implications—also no accident—can be seen in the statistical evidence gathered by Richard B. Freeman and James L. Medoff in *What Do Unions Do?* (1984). Unionized employers are not put at any disadvantage in terms of labor productivity, say Freeman and Medoff; just the contrary. But unions do take a bite out of profits. Union employers earn less on capital investment than do comparable nonunion employers—19 percent less in one survey cited by Freeman and Medoff. In a more recent study, Freeman and David Blanchflower find that this holds in international comparison as well: the costs of collective bargaining are substantially higher for employers in the United States than for those in any other advanced industrial country.[1] These findings sustain Perlman's notion of American job-consciousness as maximalist trade unionism; that is, in extracting for workers a larger share of the returns of capitalist enterprise. We do not need to explore much further to understand the fierce resistance American employers have always thrown up against collective bargaining: from the standpoint of profit maximization, anti-unionism is an entirely rational choice.

Money matters to workers, but so, at least equally, does treatment on the job. Indeed, it was over job rights that Perlman found the basis for his distinction between German and

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Anglo-American unionism: German unions concerned themselves "only with wages, hours, and watchful scrutiny of the operations of the governmental bodies administering labor laws and social insurance . . . . [but] utterly failed to put in any bid for the dozens and dozens of job control rules achieved by American and English unions and designed to give the membership a right to the job, freedom from overwork and arbitrary discrimination, and the protection of their bargaining power." The burden of Perlman's book was to argue that this was not an accidental or minor feature of American trade unionism but a fundamental characteristic.

In Western Europe, by contrast, unions generally left shopfloor issues to state-mandated works councils, labor courts, or other public agencies. Elsewhere, as in Australia, work rules were informally regulated within the plant or, as in England (notwithstanding Perlman's Anglo-American category), through negotiation with autonomous shop-steward structures. The current controversy over the so-called adversarial system in American factories validates Perlman's insight: workplace relations are a core union-management issue precisely because they are so intrusively a function of American trade unionism.

Union people do not need a lecture on Selig Perlman in order to act in the manner he ascribes to them; the institutional context within which they operate tells them to do that. But the current crisis over American "competitiveness" has called job-conscious unionism into question. To emulate the Japanese and Germans, or to get the most out of advanced methods of production, the labor movement is told that it must abandon adversarialism and embrace cooperative relations with employers. I have no quarrel with schemes that truly encourage employee involvement and flexibility, nor indeed with cooperative relations between labor and management wherever there are perceived common interests. If AT&T and the Communications Workers can work out a decision-sharing program, more power to them. But it is an illusion to believe that anything fundamental has changed when it comes to the basic relationship between labor and management in America. If the recent wave of plant closings and layoffs serve any useful purpose, it is to drive home the hard truth that no firm—not even corporate giants famed for providing job security, like IBM, or even those less pressed financially, like Proctor and Gamble and Eastman Kodak—can be counted on when the market turns bad and competition gets rough. Bank of America has a plan to convert its "platform" employees—the bank tellers, loan officers, and all the others who deal with the public in its bank branches—to part-timers so as to cut out benefits. Horror stories like this could be multiplied: forced overtime is zooming, while most jobs being created are for temporaries and contract workers—"disposable workers," the *New York Times* calls them. What the historical perspective I have described provides is a surer sense of labor's true course when passing circumstances (like those that prevailed during the 1980s) seem to say it should be doing something else.

From that historical perspective, we can also find the means for remedying one of the great failings of the labor movement, namely, articulating its mission to the outside world. The best term I can find to describe this is *economic justice*: for what else is the claim that unions make on the profits of the firm but distributive justice for working people? And what else is on-the-job protection from arbitrary treatment but a kind of industrial justice? (This is not to mention the role of the labor movement as the single most important agent for social justice in our political system, as for example, in the battle for national health insurance I just described.) One would think that these truths would be shouted from the house tops, but we all know that, on the contrary, the labor movement is designated a special interest—Big Labor—and unions, or at any rate the people who lead them, are among the least admired in every public opinion poll. If the labor movement wants to find the language of industrial justice that it needs, it would do well to study its own past.

Guideposts in Troubled Times

Let me turn now to a more specific range of historical events that might serve as guideposts

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in labor's time of troubles. One concerns the structure of the labor movement. A couple of years ago I would not have thought this worthy of special comment: there has, fortunately, been nothing in our time like the structural crisis that split organized labor apart during the 1930s. But two recent episodes in my own experience have changed my mind. One was an encounter I had with Staughton Lynd at a recent labor history conference. Lynd is the grand old man of New Left labor historiography, still fighting the good fight for rank-and-file democracy as a labor lawyer in Youngstown. Lynd was advocating a shift of labor's orientation to community-based organizing—solidarity unionism, he called it. In the labor upsurge of the 1930s, he argued, this was the first impulse, and but for the imposition of national structures, with their bureaucratic and centralizing tendencies, we might have had a militant and democratic brand of rank-and-file unionism more resistant to economic adversity and more capable of social transformation. While that possibility was cut short in the 1930s, Lynd contends that it "remains available as a model for how there could be built from below a labor movement of a different kind." In my response, I argued that what Lynd had captured in the early 1930s was real enough—community mobilization certainly did happen—but it had nothing like the significance he attached to it. For, in fact, those local movements never believed they could survive on that basis. They saw the logic of national structures: how else could they confront the great corporations like General Motors and United States Steel? Indeed, one of their main grievances, and a principal reason for the emergence of the CIO, was the AFL's resistance to their persistent demands for autonomous national industrial unions.

That exchange with Lynd made me think again about the national-union structure that is the cornerstone of the American movement—not least because his view holds considerable appeal at the moment.[2] At one time, when it was a subfield of institutional economics, labor history was much concerned with the structure and government of unions, and the definitive work in that vein—Lloyd Ulman's *Rise of the National Trade Union* (1955)—repays close reading for its brilliant analysis of how national unions emerged in response to the developing national labor and product markets of the nineteenth century. The national structure in fact was the institutional embodiment of job-conscious unionism and truly an example of form following function.

Today a gauge of labor's weakness is the breakdown of national unity as employers whipsaw local unions and pit them against one another at plant closing time. It may be that labor people do not need to be instructed on the importance of the movement's national-union structure, although, if that had been true, we never would have seen Local P-9 out there on its own against Hormel in the Austin strike of 1985. In any case, a historical perspective on how and why the national-union structure developed most certainly is the best antidote against the siren song of Lynd's localism.

Beyond that, however, is a second, less obvious historical argument. Not long ago I contributed to a new entry on labor movements for the *Encyclopedia Britannica* covering North America, that is, the United States and Canada. Such an assignment generally gets reduced to mini-essays country by country, but I thought I could fashion an integrated account because of the single thing I definitely knew before I began to read up on Canada (so much for the notion that the *Britannica* is written by great "authorities")—that our national unions generally call themselves "internationals," and do so because they contain Canadian as well as U.S. branches. No other labor movement I know of has managed this feat of integrating the unions of two countries into a single institutional structure. Everything in Canadian experience argued against this—its anti-revolutionary political culture and loyalty to the British Empire, fear of domination by the Yankee colossus, and rising Canadian nationalism. So there was no lack of effort to build a Canadian movement. The contrary logic, however, was simply overwhelming.

The enabling condition was the job-conscious grounding of the national-union structure, which rendered politics essentially beside the point, and made economic empow-

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erment the ultimate basis for action. Canadian local unions almost always chose to affiliate with the (inter-)national unions of their trade, a kind of movement from below that set the process of integration into motion. The Canadian bodies were acting in just the way, and for the same reasons, that U.S. locals did when they submitted to national organization.

From those nineteenth-century origins, a true binational movement emerged, with the Canadians generally marching a half step to the rear. There was the same split over industrial unionism in the 1930s, a Canadian version of the National Labor Relations Act in 1944, anticommunist purges in 1949–50, and in the wake of the AFL-CIO merger in 1955, the Canadian Labour Congress the next year. At that point, 70 percent of all organized workers in Canada belonged to AFL-CIO unions. Since then, the two movements have begun to disengage, but the 35 percent of Canadian membership still in AFL-CIO unions (as of 1990) suggests that integration is far from dead. And I would expect that if the movement toward a genuine common market should conclude with the ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement, it will be accompanied by a strong revival of integrating tendencies.

The free trade agreement, however, covers not only the United States and Canada, but also Mexico. And this leads me, long way round I am afraid, to the historical guidepost I am trying to identify. Can the labor movement favor ratification—and a labor market covering the whole of North America—if there is no possibility for the kind of North American labor movement that we know job-conscious unionism to be capable of building? A free trade agreement unaccompanied by at least the possibility of a true North American labor movement threatens the basic premises of American trade unionism. Ought not those premises, just as much as jobs, be the grounds on which the labor movement takes its stand on the free trade agreement? About trade-union conditions in Mexico today, the bleak facts are to be found in the report that Dan La Botz has done for the International Labor Rights Education and Research Fund entitled *Mask of Democracy: Labor Suppression in Mexico Today* (1992). As for the side agreements on environmental and labor standards, trade-union rights are at the bottom of the barrel as far as enforcement is concerned.

Rights of Workers

Collective-bargaining rights are nothing to brag about in this country either, and that brings me to a final area—labor-law reform—where I think history has something useful to say. The Wagner National Labor Relations Act marks a great divide for American labor, one which we will probably never be able to re-cross. This is because the law is grounded in fundamental American principles of free choice and free association. When the Congress saw fit in 1935 to convey those rights to workers, it set in motion the great organizing drives that led to the unionization of American basic industry. So we tend to forget that the Wagner Act is ultimately not about the rights of unions but about the rights of workers. This fact caused—and continues to cause—the labor movement considerable grief. It immediately compromised the freedom of the AFL to assign jurisdictions and of its affiliates to make contracts with employers; both were subordinated to the prior right of workers to choose their representatives through the majority-rule provisions in the law. And, beyond that, the distinction drawn between workers and unions—a distinction that would have been utterly inadmissible to Samuel Gompers—goes a long way toward explaining why we got Taft-Hartley, massive regulation of the internal affairs of labor unions, and crippling restraints on their organizing activities under the law, as, for example, in the recent *Lechmere* decision denying to "nonemployee" organizers virtually any right to operate on company property. That the law is about the rights of workers is what has given it moral force, however, and it is this that needs to be recovered from the past.

So far as the constitutional Bill of Rights is concerned, pronounced the American Civil Liberties Union in its 1937 annual report, "The greatest gain of all has been the establishment of labor's rights under the National Labor Relations Act." The law was "in effect a civil liberties

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statute." The ACLU could say this because while the right to organize might not itself have been specifically grounded in the First Amendment—the constitutional justification for the Wagner Act was located more prosaically in the commerce clause—it was inextricably linked to the constitutional rights of free speech and assembly. This relationship received confirmation from the Senate investigation launched by Robert LaFollette into the violation of civil liberties soon after passage of the Wagner Act. LaFollette fastened on the widespread reliance on industrial spies, the stockpiling of munitions, the maintenance of private armies, and all the dirty tricks used by companies to intimidate workers and prevent them from exercising their rights. Not only did these revelations immobilize the open-shop camp; they elevated labor's struggle to a battle for civil liberties.

But, beyond that, the Wagner Act was at the heart of a great transformation in the meaning of constitutional rights that took place under the New Deal. "Perhaps it is time to think of civil liberty as protection *by* the state rather than protection *against* the state," wrote John Dewey in 1936. The record of the ACLU—it initially opposed the Wagner Act on traditional libertarian grounds—is a perfect indicator of this remarkable but little noticed shift, which was the precondition for the civil rights revolution of the 1960s. In the 1930s, however, it was labor's rights that occupied center stage. Listen to Roger Baldwin of the ACLU speaking in 1938:

> However important or significant may be the struggle for the political rights of fifteen million Negroes; however important or significant the defense of religious liberties; of academic freedom; of freedom of the press, radio or motion pictures, these are on the whole trifling in national effect compared with the fight for the rights of labor to organize.

We don't have to swing all that way back to capture the essence of what Baldwin is saying to us. If we can return labor rights to the same plane as civil rights, then for how much longer would Congress continue to wink at the fact that any employer prepared to use all the legal tricks an expensive union-busting law firm deploys (and who doesn't mind violating the law and absorbing the back-pay penalties) can defend his union-free environment against all comers? Such cynicism is tolerable only because we have lost sight of the law's original intent, and of the essential truth still written into it—that it is about achieving "full freedom of association" for workers.

The world being what it is, restoring that truth will not by itself do the trick. Huge interests are invested in keeping the law as it is. One need only contemplate the solid front being assembled to defend management's right to fight strikes by hiring permanent replacements, a comparatively secondary issue, to realize how monumental a political undertaking it would to be accomplish real labor-law reform. American trade unionists don't have—in our political system have never had—the weight to pull off a feat of that magnitude. But if they cannot ever expect to achieve the social voice that Canadian unionists, say, have gained through the New Democratic party, the U.S. movement has its own kind of political moment, not one that it creates, but one that, when it occurs, can be seized on. The New Deal was such a moment; the Clinton administration may be another. Facile historical parallels are not my game here; what I am after is a historical guidepost embedded in the way the Wagner Act came about in the first place.

Let us begin with recent events. Last March the new Democratic administration established the Commission on the Future of Worker-Management Relations, the so-called Dunlop Commission after its chair, that old pro John T. Dunlop. Labor-law reform thus has come on to the national agenda, not, however, by a route calculated to give much comfort to the strategists at the AFL-CIO. What the Clinton administration has in mind are not the interests of organized labor, or even particularly the basic rights of workers under the law, but bigger fish—nothing less than American competitiveness in the global economy. The key arena, says Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich, is the workplace, and the goal, "high performance work practice." This calls for job training, gainsharing (so that workers receive

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incentives to work harder), and above all cooperative and flexible labor-management relations. Workplace reform is what in the Clinton administration's mind makes labor-law reform necessary. High performance work practice demands the rethinking of American labor law.

The labor movement cannot feel that it has any inside track to the White House. Yes, there were early on the sympathetic sentiments and the symbolic gestures, most recently in lifting the ban on rehiring the air traffic controllers fired by Ronald Reagan in the 1981 strike, but labor and the administration are on opposite sides on the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the AFL-CIO cannot count on the White House when the chips are down on the striker replacement bill. About the union role in workplace reform, administration leaders have become exceedingly cagey. "Unions are O.K. where they are," says Commerce Secretary Ron Brown. "And where they are not, it is not yet clear what sort of organization should represent workers." And from Labor Secretary Reich, who had earlier alarmed business with talk about leveling the playing field between labor and management: "The issue for me is worker voice. Workers need a voice at the workplace. I'm flexible about where that voice comes from or how it's expressed." Chilling words for the labor movement. So, are its prospects bleak? Or not?

The resemblance to what transpired during the New Deal is uncanny, and in two particular ways. First, labor relations reform got attached to broader economic goals. In the Great Depression, of course, no one worried about American competitiveness. The mass-production system then seemed unassailably the best there was or, indeed, could be. But bad labor relations did produce a different kind of drag on the economy. Section 1 of our labor law still enshrines the New Deal economic thinking that made the Wagner Act saleable in 1935: "Inequality of bargaining power . . . tends to aggravate recurrent business depressions, by depressing wage rates and the purchasing power of wage earners in industry and by preventing the stabilization of competitive wage rates and working conditions within and between industries." Then, the big issues were consumption and deflation; today, competitiveness.

The other similarity between then and now is scarcely less important, namely, that the Democratic administration should not be seen as partisan to organized labor. Roosevelt came into office with no special ties to the labor unions, no commitment to legislation for them, and, indeed, no clear understanding of what it was they wanted or needed. Reich's statement on labor representation quoted above echoes Roosevelt's own evasiveness, only FDR said it more pungently: as far as he was concerned, workers ought to be free to choose any representative they wanted, whether it be an individual, a union, the Royal Geographic Society, or the Akhoond of Swat. The Wagner Act—which would settle that issue—was not administration legislation, and on the whole Roosevelt and his key people were more impediments than otherwise as the battle unfolded and the measure took shape; FDR signed on to Senator Wagner's bill only after passage was imminent. Exactly how the Clinton administration will position itself we don't know, but it will have its own reasons, just as FDR did, to want to stay at a distance from organized labor in the coming battle over labor-law reform.

Lacking class politics as we do, Americans are strongly inclined to put the labor movement down as a special interest (and one that makes more than its share of enemies, at that). Winning something of real magnitude like the Wagner Act in 1935, or changing it today, means somehow surmounting that fundamental constraint. That's what the New Deal accomplished, first, by attaching labor's interest to unimpeachable national economic goals and, second, by creating an environment at once sympathetic to labor's cause—without Roosevelt, make no mistake about it, there would have been no Wagner Act—yet not tainted by special-interest politics. It just may be that Bill Clinton's will be the second administration to bring off this rarest of conjunctions in American labor politics.

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Going back to the origins of the Wagner Act offers one further guidepost worth bearing in mind now that the machinery for labor-law reform has been set in motion. Once adopted, the Wagner Act took on a kind of constitutional mantle, subject periodically to amendment (as by Taft-Hartley and Landrum-Griffin), and over the years acquiring a massive superstructure of interpretation and case law, but in its fundamentals seemingly beyond history. Only occasionally does an apparent anomaly arise to remind us that the labor law came out of a particular time and was premised on a specific set of industrial conditions. Consider, for example, the fact that labor-management shop committees are prohibited under Section 8a(2) from dealing with the terms and conditions of employment. The recent *Electromation* decision affirming 8a(2) has had a bracing effect on the emerging debate, unsettling employers and tempting some of them to think that maybe the status quo is not so hot after all. What kind of law is it that prohibits (or, more accurately, tightly circumscribes) a form of labor-management interaction that promises to enhance high performance work practice?

What originally prompted Section 8a(2) is well known: the hundreds of employee representation plans set up early in the New Deal by open-shop companies anxious to prove to the National Recovery Administration (NRA) that workers were receiving the right to organize and bargain collectively guaranteed them by Section 7a. Company-dominated labor organizations—the employee representation plans—were the union-evading techniques of choice at the time the Wagner Act was being enacted. Much more in the law—the basic procedure for selecting bargaining agents, for example, or the principle of exclusive representation—is there because of the same battles during the NRA period over the company-dominated employee representation plans that led to 8a(2). And, so is something as fundamental as the emphatic commitment to collective bargaining and contractual relations; the other side of the coin was that an alternative works-council system was being rejected. For that was what the employee representation plans had come to mean by 1935—a representational system within plants posed against collective bargaining with outside trade unions.

If the Wagner Act once settled this basic question, that seems no longer to be the case. The stir over 8a(2) suggests a broad interest—not least from the Clinton administration and the Dunlop Commission—in alternative forms of workplace representation. And just because 8a(2) is woven into the entire fabric of the law, much more is going to be at stake than the revision or repeal of a single provision. It will behoove the labor movement to know its history when the debate is joined.

The Clinton administration is surely right to believe that fresh thinking is called for. Being the policy wonk that he is, Clinton appoints commissions, calls conferences, consults experts. Roosevelt had a different style. He left the wonking to others, but he knew how to preside over the policy fray and when to bring things to a conclusion. The two years leading up to the Wagner Act were preeminently a time of searching debate, just what the Clinton administration hopes to call forth with its Dunlop Commission (omitting, of course, the furious industrial battles that drove the debate in Roosevelt's time).

The labor movement won that debate, and if we are entering a comparable period, then there is one last guidepost to be sought from the past: what the union movement brought to the struggle that enabled it to prevail over the opposition of American capital. Not, certainly, labor's political muscle, which was punier in 1935 than it is today; nor a leadership any abler or more savvy. We have to remember that the CIO came after the Wagner Act, not before, and that it was William Green, not John L. Lewis, who was labor's voice in Washington. What the AFL did have was a true and inflexible sense of what it wanted. It would have been easier, certainly more politic, to have compromised over the employee representation plans, which was what FDR wanted—as, for example, when its local auto unions were offered the chance in early 1935 to participate under the aegis of the NRA in elections within a works-council structure. The AFL boycotted

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those elections, even though at the time its prospects in the auto industry looked totally bleak.

The source of this intransigence was, of course, the job-consciousness with which I began this essay. In the battle for the Wagner Act, this firmness of basic perspective made a powerful difference, not least by clarifying what was at stake in the choice of a system of labor representation. If works councils were mandated, would that not invite state intrusion into every plant in the country? Exactly that began to happen as the employee representation plans came to be regulated by the National Recovery Administration. In the auto industry, where this went furthest, plant elections were administered by an NRA labor board, which also began to hold hearings on grievances and serve as a kind of labor court for the industry. The scary implications are captured in what auto unionists sometimes called the NRA works councils: "government unions."

The law that was adopted stepped back from that prospect, drawing with fine clarity the line between public and private. The state protected the right to organize and bargain collectively; collective bargaining itself remained free. The line drawn between public and private is one great axis of the law; the other is its grounding in basic individual rights. And just as it was the intransigence of the labor movement that kept the focus on free collective bargaining, so also with the rights of workers. From that standpoint, employee representation was always a tainted affair, and not only because it had been introduced with transparent cynicism when Section 7a went on the books. No amount of revision of the plans, nor of NRA regulation, nor of employer reassurance, was enough to make employee representation square with the proposition that the freedom of association of workers ought not to be abridged or corrupted. This is why Section 8a(2) takes the form that it does, prohibiting not only domination but any kind of employer support for labor organizations. Once the country decided that basic rights were at stake, the game was up for the opponents of the Wagner Act, and, by the same token, the battle was won by the labor movement.

The only trick was finding the right grounding for workers' rights. In employment law the fundamental rule ever since the decay of master-servant doctrine was liberty of contract, which for a century had provided employers with the legal basis for fending off state regulation and collective bargaining. The Wagner Act relied on that very doctrine, only stripped of the fiction of freely contracting individuals: the law says that it intends to remedy "the inequality of bargaining power between [employers and] employees who do not enjoy full freedom of association and actual liberty of contract." That final phrase—*actual* liberty of contract—is a particularly delicious hoisting of the enemy on his own petard. The powers of the state were thus mobilized to do for the labor movement what it had proved incapable of doing for itself—enable workers to organize without fear and require the employer to enter contractual relations with the labor organizations of their choice.

Since workplace reform is the pressing concern of the moment, we might conclude by revealing just how the law dealt with the thorny question of workplace representation. The answer is a thundering silence. The law says nothing about shop stewards, grievance procedures, or the workplace rights of workers (save to assure them that the law did not abridge their rights to confer with and submit grievances to employers). It was not that the drafters of the Wagner Act had no notion of how these matters would be settled. For in fact the basic choices had already been made in the course of the battles over the employee representation plans, which was why, once collective bargaining began, there was so little strife or uncertainty about what to put into the first contracts: a shop-steward structure, a grievance procedure, protection against wrongful discharge, and provisions for seniority and pay equity that have since become so familiar a part of the labor relations landscape. Nothing testified more powerfully to the triumph of job-conscious unionism in 1935 than the absorption of workplace represention into the realm of trade unionism. And if a process of disengage-

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ment is now contemplated, a rethinking of all the old questions will be required.

In its time, employee representation was a plausible option, and the historian can readily imagine a past in which works councils became a dominant mode of labor representation in the absence of the Wagner Act. Repealing Section 8a(2) is also plausible, and one can imagine—our secretary of labor can certainly imagine—luxuriant new forms of representation once management is no longer required to stay at arm's length from labor organizations. But if American labor law is still about the rights of workers, are we prepared to see these rights diminished so as to make room for representational forms that invite employer domination? Alternatively, are we ready to make the state the guarantor of these forms of representation?

As for the labor movement, has it come to the point where it is willing to see its functions truncated in the name of high-performance work practice? The labor movement cannot be opposed to reforms that make for better systems of work. In fact, it was not opposed at the time of the Wagner Act. The workplace representation that emerged from that law met the needs of the mass-production system, which was why once the law was in place it won the assent of American employers. But in achieving this organized labor did not sacrifice what was essential to it as a job-conscious movement. This is the balance it must strike again in the days ahead. □

Notes

[1] David G. Blanchflower and Richard B. Freeman, "Unionism in the United States and Other Advanced OECD Countries," *Industrial Relations* 31 (Winter 1992), pp. 80–94. The most recent research casts doubt on the linkage between unionization and higher productivity, but underscores the conclusion that unionized firms are less profitable than nonunion ones. Barry T. Hirsch, *Labor Unions and the Economic Performance of Firms* (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1991).

[2] See, for example, Charles Heckscher, *The New Unionism: Employee Involvement in the Modern Corporation* (New York, 1988); Michael J. Piore, "The Future of Unions," in George Strauss et al., eds., *The State of the Unions* (Madison, 1992), pp. 387–410; Alice Kessler-Harris and Bertram Silverman, "Beyond Industrial Unionism," *Dissent* (Winter 1992), pp. 61–66.

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Joseph Raz

MULTICULTURALISM: A LIBERAL PERSPECTIVE

Multiculturalism is a problem today and for the foreseeable future—a problem for politics and the ethics of politics. In this essay I want to explore the implications of the liberal political philosophy I have faith in for the way contemporary democracies should deal with this problem.

Political philosophy does not provide us with eternally valid theories for the government of all human societies. To my mind political philosophy is time-bound. It is valid—if it is valid at all—for the conditions prevailing here and now. Its conclusions apply also to similar situations elsewhere. But we cannot set the precise boundaries for their application. There are two reasons for this limitation.

First, it is impossible to articulate comprehensively all the relevant moral considerations we are aware of, and impossible to state in general how much they weigh against each other in situations of conflict. Moral knowledge is practical in a special sense: it is embodied in our practices and acquired by habituation. We often know what to do when faced with the situation in which action is called for when we could not have known what to do ahead of time. Everything we know can be articulated, can be expressed in words. But it cannot be exhaustively expressed in general abstract formulae. The situation is analogous with that of a person who embarks on a journey to a distant destination. Ask him ahead of time to describe the route and he will be unable to do so. Yet as he progresses along the road he recalls at every stage how to proceed at that point. Not everything we know can we exhaustively state in the abstract. Moral knowledge escapes such formulation, and that means that moral theories are to be taken as mere approximations. Those who apply them inflexibly are fanatics heading for disaster.

The second reason for the fact that political morality is bound to the here and now is that there are limitations to our ability to conceive how society will develop. The problem is not merely due to the complexity of the social conditions that may prevail in the future, a complexity that defeats our ability to apply our principles to those conditions. The problem extends further. Social situations can change in such a way that the concepts we employ to understand them become inapplicable.

I start my reflections with these remarks for two reasons. First, my belief in the contextuality of political theory presupposes value pluralism, which lies at the heart of the problem of multiculturalism. Second, contextuality highlights the complicated relations of contemporary liberalism to its classical ancestry. That relationship is not one of identity. Seventeenth and eighteenth-century liberalism was, by and large, right for its time and place. Those of us who adhere today to liberalism

This article is adapted from a talk given at a conference on Multiculturalism and the Law organized by Max Brod in Leiden in July 1992. More detailed arguments for the views sketched here can be found in the following works by the author: *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford University Press, 1986); "National Self-Determination," written with A. Margalit, the *Journal of Philosophy*, 87 (1990), p. 449; and "Free Expression and Personal Identification," *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, 11 (1991), p. 303. The author wishes to thank P.A. Bulloch for helpful comments on an earlier version.

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should do so not by following the theories of Locke or Kant, but by looking for contemporary theories, valid for our own conditions, which descend in spirit from the classical texts. This is important for a reflection on the importance of community for individual well-being.

The migration of labor familiar since the rise of capitalism, and accelerated to undreamt of proportions by the combined effect of contemporary mass media, rapid communication, and easy transportation, has led to unprecedented levels of communal disintegration and individual alienation. The nineteenth-century bourgeoisie reacted to the migrations from the country to the cities by developing a rich urban culture, a culture of anonymity and bureaucratic impartiality. This is the culture we are all children of, a culture in which people resent charity and insist on entitlements to social services and benefits financed by strangers whom they never meet, and administered by faceless officials. Ours is a culture in which we feel more comfortable on a beach, in a park, a restaurant, or in a concert hall bustling with strangers, observing them as they observe us, than on a lonely beach or an empty restaurant. We feel at ease in an apartment building served by elevators that keep its residents unseen by each other, and we feel stifled in a closely knit local community where everyone knows us, and where every deviation from our daily routine and every one of our visitors is closely observed by our neighbors.

The advantages of the culture of urban anonymity are many. But such anonymity is inadequate to cope with the multiculturalism that first emerged in many countries as a by-product of the decolonization movement and is gathering pace all the time. The culture of urban anonymity could absorb individual migrants escaping oppressive or disintegrating societies. It is tempting to exaggerate and say that it was made for such people. But this culture cannot adequately cope with the conditions of today. The threatening results of this failure are subcultures of anomie, alienation from society and its institutions, and the emergence of a growing underclass.

Liberalism has responded to the phenomenon of diversity in three ways. First was the attitude that I will call "toleration."* It consists in letting minorities conduct themselves as they wish without being criminalized, so long as they do not interfere with the culture of the majority. To a considerable degree this meant restriction of the use of public spaces and public media by the minority. It also usually meant that all its activities were to be financed out of the resources of the minority community—in addition to its contribution through taxation to the maintenance of the general culture.

Two types of argument are commonly advanced to support toleration. First, principled reasons for restricting the use of coercion: the Harm Principle, for example, prescribes that people may not be coerced except in order to restrain them from causing harm to others or to punish them for causing harm to others. Arguments of the second type appeal to considerations of public peace, social harmony, and the legitimation of the system of government, all of which may be jeopardized by the resentment of minorities that are not allowed to continue with their religious and cultural activities.

Toleration was eventually supplemented, perhaps even supplanted, by a second liberal policy toward minorities—one based on the assertion of an individual right against discrimination on national, racial, ethnic, or religious grounds, or on grounds of gender or sexual orientation. Nondiscrimination rights are a natural extension of the classical liberal conception of constitutional civil and political rights. They also fit that strand of liberalism made popular by the writings of John Rawls, according to which the principles used to

* I do not mean to suggest that the concept of toleration cannot be applied to other policies. I have offered a more comprehensive analysis of toleration in *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford University Press, 1986). Here I use the term to capture the spirit of one fairly familiar attitude toward minorities.

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justify political action should make no reference to any specific conception of the good life.

Nondiscrimination rights go well beyond toleration. They have far-reaching consequences that affect the way the majority community leads its own life. Most obviously, it is no longer free to exclude members of the minority from its schools, places of employment, residential neighborhoods, and so on. Usually nondiscrimination rights are interpreted to allow each community control over certain institutions. They also normally tolerate a measure of discrimination in one's private dealings. But under a regime of scrupulous nondiscrimination a country's public services, its educational system, and its economic and political arenas are no longer the preserve of the majority, but common to all its members as individuals.

The third liberal approach to the problem of minorities is the affirmation of multiculturalism. It is advanced as suitable in those societies in which there are several stable cultural communities both wishing and able to perpetuate themselves. It does not apply to countries that receive many immigrants from diverse cultures, but where those from each culture are few in number or, even if numerous, do not wish to keep their separate identity. Perhaps even their very migration to the host country is an expression of their rejection of the culture or group from which they emigrated. Finally, multiculturalism should not be pursued regarding cultural groups that have lost their ability to perpetuate themselves. This could happen where the ossification of their culture and the allure of the surrounding cultures mean that the vast majority of their young people wish to assimilate into the majority culture.

In the rest of this essay, I will use "multiculturalism" to refer to a society in which the conditions set out in the previous paragraph obtain, and also to a policy of saying yes to this situation. It is important to distinguish two types of multicultural societies. In one, the different communities live mainly in separate geographical regions (for example, the Inuits in Canada and the Scots in Britain). In the other, there is in the main no geographical separateness. For the most part the different communities share the same public places and common services, and they mix in workplaces and in leisure facilities. It is this second condition that characterizes societies whose multiculturalism is relatively recent, resulting from the ever-growing migrations of the modern era. This essay focuses on the second type, that of multiculturalism without territorial separation.

The policy of multiculturalism differs from that which relies exclusively on nondiscrimination rights in rejecting the individualistic bias of the latter. While endorsing nondiscrimination rights, multiculturalism emphasizes the importance to political action of two evaluative judgments. First, the belief that individual freedom and prosperity depend on full and unimpeded membership in a respected and flourishing cultural group. Second, a belief in value pluralism, and in particular in the validity of the diverse values embodied in the practices of different societies.

Given those beliefs, multiculturalism requires a political society to recognize the equal standing of all the stable and viable cultural communities existing in that society. This implies the need for multicultural political societies to reconceive themselves. There is no room for talk of a minority problem or of a majority tolerating the minorities. A political society, a state, consists—if it is multicultural—of diverse communities and belongs to none of them. Although the relative size of the different communities affects the solutions to conflicts over resources and public spaces among them, none of them should be allowed to see the state as its own, or to think that the others enjoy their standing on sufferance.

The purpose of my remaining discussion is to elaborate and defend this brief description of multiculturalism. I will do so from a liberal perspective. Not everyone in the liberal camp—if I may call it that—will agree to these views. Liberal doubts about multiculturalism stem from three main sources: first, there is the view of liberalism as the bastion of individual freedom, and correspondingly a fear that multiculturalism supports the power of commu-

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nities to hold on to reluctant members against their will. Second, there is the view of the superiority of the secular, democratic, European culture, and a reluctance to admit equal rights to inferior oppressive religious cultures, or ones whose cultural values are seen as limited and less developed. Why should liberals give succor to cultures based on the repudiation of liberal values? Finally, there is the fear that a common culture is the cement of society and that without it society will fall apart. I will first state briefly the liberal case for multiculturalism and then deal with these three objections.

The brief argument is that denial of multiculturalism in today's Western societies, far from keeping liberal ideals pure, leads to their degeneration into what might be called "supermarket liberalism." Before I venture a brief explanation, I would like to clarify the spirit underlying my observations. It is not one of utopian hope. It is not one of a vision of the great future liberalism holds the key to, a future in which the noblest human hopes will come to fruition. It is the spirit of pessimism nourished by perception of conflict as inevitable, and its resolution as less than ideal, regardless of who wins.

The Case For Multiculturalism

Liberalism is a political morality that arises out of a view of the good of people, a view that emphasizes the value of freedom to individual well-being. Liberalism upholds the value of being in charge of one's life, charting its course by one's own successive choices. Much liberal thought has explored the ways in which restrictions on individual choices, whether legal or social, can be removed and obstacles to choice—due to poverty, lack of education, or other limitations on access to goods—overcome. It was also common once, though not now, to distinguish freedom and license. Freedom, said Spinoza, Kant, and others, is conduct in accord with rational laws. License is arbitrary choice, in disregard of reason. The slogan that freedom is not license was often abused, and abused to impose unreasonable restrictions on freedom. I believe, however, that when correctly understood, this view is right. Moreover, once it is reinstated and its implications understood, the justification of multiculturalism becomes obvious.

The claim that freedom is action in accordance with reason is a consequence of the fact that freedom presupposes the availability of options to choose from, and that options—all except the very elementary ones—have an internal structure, an inner logic with witch we must comply in order to exercise our freedom. A simple illustration will make the point. One cannot play chess by doing what one wants, that is, by moving the rook diagonally. One can only play chess by following the rules of chess. Having to do so may look like a limitation of freedom to a child. But that is the tempting illusion of license. In fact, complying with the rules of chess and of other options is a precondition of freedom, an inescapable part of its realization.

Of course, games are unlike the practice of medicine or law, the profession of teaching, or the role of parents, spouses, friends, and so on. Relative to the options that make up the core of our lives they are simple and tend to be governed by explicit rules. The options that make up the core of our lives are complex and multidimensional, rely on complex unstated conventions, and allow extensive room for variation and improvization. One doctor's bedside manner is not like another's. But there are things which every doctor should do, one way or another, and others no doctor may do. And so on.

Freedom depends on options that depend on rules that constitute those options. The next stage in the argument shows that options presuppose a culture. They presuppose shared meanings and common practices. Why so?—the child may ask—why must I play chess as it is known to our culture, rather than invent my own game? Indeed, the wise parent will answer, there is nothing to stop you from inventing your own game. But this is only possible because inventing one's own games is an activity recognized by our culture with its own form and meaning. What you cannot do is invent everything in your life. Why not? the child will persist, as children do. The answer is

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essentially that we cannot be children all the time. It is impossible to conduct one's life on the basis of explicit and articulated rules. The density of our activities, their multiplicity of dimensions make it impossible to consider and decide deliberately on all of them. A lot has to be done, so to speak, automatically. But to fit into a pattern that automatic aspect of behavior has to be guided, to be directed and channeled into a coherent meaningful whole. Here then is the argument.

The core options that give meaning to our lives—the different occupations we can pursue, the friendships and relationships we can have, the loyalties and commitments that we attract and develop, the cultural, sporting, or other interests we develop—are all dense webs of complex actions and interactions. They are open only to those who master them, but their complexity and the density of their details defy explicit learning or comprehensive articulation. They are available only to those who have or can acquire practical knowledge of them, that is, knowledge embodied in social practices and transmitted by habituation.

So far I have been talking of social practices that constitute options as if they come one by one. The reality is different. Social practices are interlaced with each other. The practices of parenting intersect with those of other social relationships. Not only do many people move naturally from one role to another, but even where such transitions are not expected the different family roles are at least in part defined by analogy and contrast to each other. Similarly with occupations. Our common ways of distinguishing groups of them, such as the professions, clerical jobs, those belonging to trade and commerce, the caring professions, and so on, are each marked by common and overlapping practices. This commonality of interlocking practices making up the range of life options open to anyone socialized into them is what cultures are. Small wonder, then, that membership in cultural groups is of vital importance to individuals.

Only through being socialized in a culture can one tap the options that give life a meaning. By and large, one's cultural membership determines the horizon of one's opportunities, of what one may become, or (if one is older) what one might have been. Little surprise that it is in the interest of every person to be fully integrated in a cultural group. Equally plain is the importance to its members of the prosperity, cultural and material, of that group. Its prosperity contributes to the richness and variety of the opportunities they have access to. This is the first of three ways in which membership in a cultural group affects one's prospects in life.

The second is the fact that a common culture facilitates social relations and is a condition of rich and comprehensive personal relationships.* One particular relationship is especially sensitive to this point. Erotic attraction, economic, or certain raw emotional needs can often help overcome even the greatest cultural gaps. But in one's relations with one's children and with one's parents a common culture is an essential condition for the tight bonding we expect and desire. A policy that forcibly detaches children from the culture of their parents not only undermines the stability of society by undermining people's ability to sustain long-term intimate relations, it also threatens one of the deepest desires of most parents, the desire to understand their children, share their world, and to remain close to them.

Finally, being a member of a prosperous cultural community affects individual well-being because, for most people, membership is a major determinant of their sense of who they are; it contributes to what we have come to call their sense of identity. This is not really surprising given that one's culture sets the horizon of one's opportunities. I am what I am, but equally I am what I can become or could have been. To understand a person we need to know how that person came to be what he or she is, that is, to understand what she might have been and why she is some of those things and not others. In this way culture constitutes

* This point does not suggest that people belonging to two nations, or two social classes, say a French or a Dutch person, cannot be friends. What I am suggesting is that there is a considerable common cultural background to people from diverse but culturally neighboring groups.

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identity. Slighting my culture, holding it up for ridicule, denying its value, and so on, hurts me and offends my dignity. It is particularly offensive if the slight bears the imprimatur of my state or of the majority or official culture of my country.

So this is the case for multiculturalism. It is a case that recognizes that cultural groups are not susceptible to reductive analysis in terms of individual actions or states of mind. Cultural, and other, groups have a life of their own. But their moral claim to respect and to prosperity rests entirely on their importance to the prosperity of individual human beings. This case is a liberal case for it emphasizes culture as a factor that gives shape and content to individual freedom. Because individual freedom and well-being depend on unimpeded membership in a respected and prosperous cultural group, there is little wonder that multiculturalism emerges as a central element in any decent liberal political program for societies inhabited by a number of viable cultural groups.

The Dialectics of Pluralism

One of the difficulties in making multiculturalism politically acceptable stems from the enmity between members of different cultural groups, especially when they inhabit one and the same country. Such enmity is quite universal. Even when relations between two communities are at their most amicable, they are accompanied by disapproval of the other culture for its decadence or vulgarity, for lack of a sense of humor, for its treatment of women, or something else. It would be comforting to think that such enmity is sometimes justified, and in the other cases it is due to ignorance and bigotry that can be eradicated. I believe, however, that this optimism is unwarranted, and that conflict is endemic to multiculturalism.

It is, in fact, endemic to value pluralism in all its forms. Value pluralism is the view that many different activities and incompatible forms of life are valuable. Two values are incompatible if they cannot be realized or pursued to the fullest degree in a single life. In this sense value pluralism is a familiar mundane phenomenon. One cannot be both a sprinter and a long-distance runner, for they require the development of different physical abilities and also tend to suit different psychological types. Philosophers do not make good generals, and generals do not make good philosophers. One cannot pursue both the contemplative and the active life, and so on.

The mutual exclusivity of valuable activities and ways of life is a commonplace. It becomes philosophically significant the moment one rejects the belief in the reducibility of all values to one value that serves as a common denominator to all the valuable ways of life. In our day and age, the reduction is most commonly to the value of feeling happy, or having one's desires satisfied. Value pluralism is the doctrine that denies that such a reduction is possible. It takes the plurality of valuable activities and ways of life to be ultimate and ineliminable. This radically changes our understanding of pluralism. On a reductive-monistic view, when one trades the pleasures (and anxieties) of family life for a career as a sailor one is hoping to get the same thing one is giving up, be it happiness, pleasure, or something else. So long as one plans correctly and succeeds in carrying out one's plans, there is no loss of any kind. One gives up the lesser pleasure one would derive from a family for the greater pleasure of life at sea. If value pluralism is correct, this view is totally wrong. What one loses is of a different kind from what one gains. Even in success there is a loss, and quite commonly there is no meaning to the judgment that one gains more than one loses. When one was faced with valuable options and successfully chose one of them, then one simply chose one way of life rather than another, both being good and not susceptible to comparison of degree.

Theoretically, this plurality of valuable ways of life need not manifest itself in the same society. We may value the culture of the classical Greeks without its opportunities being options for us. But typically in our day and age, pluralism exists within every society, indeed, within every culture. That generates conflict among incompatible activities and

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ways of life. When valuable alternatives are remote and unavailable, they do not threaten our commitment to and confidence in the values manifested in our own life. But when they are available to us and pursued by others in our vicinity, they tend to be felt as a threat. I chose A over B, but was I right? Skills and character traits cherished by my way of life are a handicap for those pursuing one or another of its alternatives. I value long contemplation and patient examination: these are the qualities I require in my chosen course. Their life, by contrast, requires impetuosity, swift responses, and decisive action, and they despise the slow contemplative types as indecisive. They almost have to. To succeed in their chosen way, they have to be committed to it and to believe that the virtues it requires should be cultivated. They therefore cannot regard those others as virtues for them. By the same token it is only natural that they will value in others what they choose to emulate themselves. Hence, we have a variety of dismissive attitudes to the virtues of the competing ways of life.

Conflict is endemic. Of course, pluralists can step back from their personal commitments and appreciate in the abstract the value of other ways of life. But this acknowledgment coexists with, and cannot replace, the feelings of rejection and dismissiveness. Tension is an inevitable concomitant of value pluralism. And it is a tension without stability, without the prospect of a reconciliation of the two perspectives, the one recognizing the validity of competing values and the one hostile to them. One is forever moving from one to the other.

The Transforming Effect

The inescapable tension between acceptance of and rivalry with competing valuable ways of life, which forever threatens to destabilize it, is common to all forms of value pluralism, where incompatible options coexist in the same society. This tension exists in homogeneous as well as in multicultural societies. Admittedly the latter tend to generate a heightened awareness of the tension because they polarize it along cultural-ethnic divides. But it is equally acute in societies with strong class divisions, for example. The next form of the dialectics of pluralism I want to focus on is specific to multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism arises from a break in a relatively homogeneous society. It is a result of the conquest of a territory and the subjugation of its indigenous population, or of large-scale migrations such as the migration of East African Indians to Britain or Turks to the Netherlands. Sometimes it arises as a consequence of political union of people from neighboring, but culturally distinct, countries. In all these cases the constituent cultures face great pressures to change as a result of their interaction with the other groups. Naturally they wish to resist the pressure. The desire to resist is particularly felt by small communities facing the challenge of coexistence with much larger groups whose cultures dominate the public arena.

The view that I advocate may be expected to be sympathetic to such conservationist trends. After all, the whole idea of multiculturalism is to encourage communities to sustain their own diverse cultures. But although this is so, and although it is of the essence of multiculturalism that different communities should enjoy their fair share of opportunities and resources to maintain and develop their cultures in their own way, multiculturalism as I see it is not inherently opposed to change, not even to change induced by coexistence with other cultural groups. On the contrary, multiculturalism insists that members of the different groups should appreciate and respect the other cultures in their society. This in itself leads to inevitable developments in the constituent cultures, especially those that developed in relative isolation.

Furthermore, multiculturalism calls on all the constituent communities in a society to tolerate each other. Some of these communities have cultures that are themselves intolerant. Such cultures will face great pressure for change in a multicultural society.

Finally, multiculturalism insists on a right of exit, the right of individuals to abandon their cultural group. Many cultures do all they can to stop their members from drifting away. On this

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front, again, they will find themselves under pressure to change in a liberal multicultural society.*

This tension in multiculturalism between a policy of protecting a plurality of cultures and encouraging change in them may surprise some. But it should not. Liberal multiculturalism does not arise out of conservative nostalgia for pure exotic cultures. It is not a policy of conserving or fossilizing cultures in their pristine state. Nor is it a policy fostering variety for its own sake. It recognizes that change is inevitable in today's world. It recognizes that fossilized cultures cannot serve their members well in contemporary societies with their fast rate of social and economic change. Liberal multiculturalism stems from a concern for the well-being of the members of society. That well-being presupposes respect for one's cultural group and its prosperity. But none of this is opposed to change.

Change is resisted most when it comes as a result of the hostility of the dominant culture. It is also resisted when it arouses fear that one's culture will disappear altogether—diluted and then assimilated by others. In a country where multiculturalism is practiced by the government and accepted by the population the first fear should not arise. The second is less easily laid to rest. Nor is liberal multiculturalism opposed in principle to the assimilation of one cultural group by others. In some countries some of the constituent cultures may lose their vitality and be gradually absorbed. So long as the process is not coerced, does not arise out of lack of respect for people and their communities, and is sufficiently gradual, there is nothing wrong in it. The dying of old cultures is as much part of normal life as the birth of new ones. But the process is much slower and rarer than those who trumpet their fears of the death of their cultures suggest. What they commonly intend is resistance to change, masquerading, innocently or otherwise, as a fight for survival.

In these last remarks, I display again the non-utopian character of the liberal multiculturalism that I advocate. It rejects any ideal that commits us to arrest the course of time, the pressures for change, at some moment of perfection. Indeed it refuses to have any truck with notions of perfection. Furthermore, it is non-utopian in seeing conflict between and within cultures as endemic.

Why Respect Cultures?

The earlier discussion has already brought into the open the most fundamental dialectical element in liberal multiculturalism. While it respects a variety of cultures it refuses to take them at their own estimation. It has its own reasons for respecting cultures, reasons like those expressed in the first part of this essay. These are likely to vary from the reasons provided in most cultures for their value. For example, religious cultures will justify themselves in theological terms. The justification of those very same cultures in the eyes of liberal multiculturalism is humanistic, not theological. In particular, multiculturalism urges respect for cultures that are not themselves liberal cultures—very few are. But it does so while imposing liberal protections for individual freedom on those cultures. This in itself brings it into conflict with the cultures it urges governments to respect. The conflict is inevitable because liberal multiculturalism recognizes and respects those cultures only to the extent that they serve true values. Since its respect of cultures is conditional and granted from a point of view outside many of them, it finds itself in uneasy alliance with supporters of those cultures, sometimes joining them in a common front while at other times turning against them to impose ideals of toleration and mutual respect or to protect the members of those very cultures against oppression by their own group.

Objections to Multiculturalism

It is time to turn to the objections to multiculturalism. The one I can do least justice to is that which says: "Some cultures are inferior to others. By encouraging their prosperity, one is acting against the interests of their members. To serve their interests best one

* It is important to recall that this discussion is confined to multicultural societies where the different communities are not geographically segregated.

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should discourage those cultures and encourage rapid assimilation of their members into our superior culture." I believe that very often judgments about the inferiority of other cultures are based on bigotry and ignorance, and that in truth many cultures cannot be compared in those terms. Each of them is valuable. Each of them can be improved in a way consistent with its own spirit and out of its own resources. But none of them can be judged superior to the others. However, these views can only be justified by plunging into a discussion of the foundations of ethics, which we are mercifully absolved from here. Instead I will address three subsidiary points:

First, some people fear, consciously or unconsciously, that if our culture is not superior to others, we are not entitled to love it as much as we do. If it is not the best, they feel, then it is irrational to be so dedicated to its preservation and cultivation. Moreover, if it is not the best then our ignorance of other cultures is inexcusable. If they are all good and none is superior, we should be equally knowledgeable and interested in all of them.

It is not my wish to discourage people from taking an interest in other cultures, and one should certainly be acquainted with the cultures that inhabit one's country—this is so whether or not they are the equal of one's own. That is one of the duties of citizenship and has nothing to do with the merits of any culture. Putting these considerations aside for the moment, let it be said that one's devotion to and love of one's culture in no way depends on believing it to be better than others. It is rational and valid whether or not it is better than others, so long as one loves one's own culture for what is truly good in it.

Compare one's attitude to one's culture with one's love of one's children. We rightly ridicule parents who feel that their devotion to their children requires holding them to be little geniuses, much better than other children. One loves one's children because they are one's children.* The same is true with all personal attachments. The people one loves need not be better than others to make one's love rational. So long as one loves them for the right reasons, and admires in them their virtues rather than their vices, one's love and friendship are sound.

Nor need one feel obliged to become acquainted with all valuable cultures. To do so is the desire of some people, and it is a worthy desire. But it is not one that all people must share. There is no reason to know about or share in everything that is valuable. This too is an aspect of value pluralism. There are many valuable things in the world, and we have no reason to, nor any real possibility of, pursuing all of them.

Second, I would not wish to deny that some cultures or aspects of some cultures are unacceptable and should not benefit from the positive attitude that multiculturalism stands for. Some cultures, for example, repress groups of their own members or of outsiders. Slave cultures, racially discriminatory cultures, and homophobic cultures, are obvious examples. These can be supported only to the degree that it is possible to neutralize their oppressive aspects, or compensate for them (for example by providing a convenient exit to members of the group discriminated against).

The test of oppression should be carefully considered. One needs to distinguish between it and the occasional failure of socialization that leaves an individual member of a cultural group alienated from the culture and unable to find fulfillment within it. Occasional failures of socialization are endemic to all cultures. Oppression differs from them in being the result of a structural feature of a culture that systematically prevents people from giving expression to an important aspect of their nature. Not all people will be affected, many will not belong to the oppressed group, where the oppression is based on racial, religious, or some such grounds. Others will not have a great need to express the repressed aspect of their personality, or they will find ways of making do with alternatives. In all sexually oppressive societies many people learn to do without much sex. In societies that repress free inquiry or creativity, many find that their need to engage in these is limited. Adjustability is

* And I do not mean genetically one's own. I mean that they are children one brought up and is attached to.

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never complete, and repression invariably leads to much suffering. Even those who adjust suffer. Their lives and personalities become stunted and do not reach full expression. When this is a result of a systematic feature of their culture, the fault is with the culture. In serious cases, it may justify suppressing oppressive cultures. In others, it will call for reform and for mitigating actions in the larger, multicultural society.

Third, even when cultures are at fault, we have reason for supportive toleration. People bred and socialized within such cultures often know no better, and have no choice. Moreover, by the time they are grown up their ability to transplant themselves and become a part of another culture is limited. The limits differ from case to case and are a matter of degree. It is easier to acquire a home in a new cultural community when it does not differ too much from one's own and when one has self-generated motives to do so. It is more difficult when the distance between the cultures is great and the reason for the transition is externally imposed. Given that even oppressive cultures can give people quite a lot, it follows that one should be particularly wary of organized campaigns of assimilation and discrimination against "inferior" and oppressive cultures. They provide many of their members with all that they can have.

In saying this I am not retreating from my earlier view that oppression should not be tolerated. I am merely urging restraint and consideration in thinking of the means by which it is to be countered.

Oppression of members of the cultural group was the second objection to multiculturalism introduced at the outset. We have already considered it, and conceded its force. It is worth adding here that existence in a multicultural society often makes cultural groups more repressive than they would be were they to exist in relative isolation. The insecurity of existence, especially where there is real or perceived discrimination, tends to encourage conservative elements in cultural groups. It also tends to increase pressure on members of the group to turn inward and reduce their contact with the external world—as the only guarantee against defection from the group. Such conservative and repressive pressures can lead to bitter intergenerational conflicts.

Furthermore, the significance of various social practices may change in the new context of a multicultural society. The status of women is a case in point. Probably all cultures known to us, even those that did not repress women, distinguished between men and women in that a large array of social relationships, occupations, leisure activities, and educational and cultural opportunities, were gender specific. If such separation does not carry with it the implication of an inferior status, and if the opportunities available to both men and women are adequate for their full development and self-expression, there is nothing wrong with such gender-sensitive cultures—so long as they succeed in socializing the young to a willing acceptance of their ways. But once such a cultural group is transplanted to a different environment in which the dominant cultures accept gender determination of opportunities only in exceptional cases, the transplanted group is transformed into an oppressive one. In the new environment it is bound to fail in socializing its young to accept its ways and reject the ideas prevalent in the general culture. In contemporary liberal societies, the prevailing notions of gender nondiscrimination and the debate about feminism are bound to filter across cultural barriers. They will affect the self-understanding of the young (and not only the young). They will inform their perceptions of their own native cultural practices. When this happens the meaning of the gender-based practices changes. It is understood by many of its own members as consigning women to an inferior status. Protestations that that is a perversion of the true meaning of those practices are to no avail. The true meaning of social practices is their social meaning.

A positive attitude to multiculturalism can be thought to lend support to the conservative strands in various communities. But to my mind this is a mistake. Cultures are bound to undergo changes within a multicultural society. The fact that members of cultural groups

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intermix to a considerable degree is bound to have its impact on the different groups in the society. The preservation of their culture is justified only in terms of its contribution to well-being. This requires an adjustment of each of the groups to the conditions of a relatively harmonious coexistence within one political society.

Peaceful coexistence in one political society requires men and women to acquaint themselves with the customs of all the people and ethnic groups in their country. Hence they will have opportunities, sometimes temptations, to drift out of their native cultural group into another. Attempts to prevent people from seizing these opportunities undermine the possibility of mutual peaceful existence.

Moreover, the opportunity to exit from a group is a vital protection for those members of it who are oppressed by its culture. The opportunity of exit is a counter to the worry that multiculturalism encourages oppressive cultures to perpetuate their ways. I have already indicated that political societies are entitled, indeed required to discourage oppressive practices in their constituent cultural groups. The groups should be encouraged to change such practices. But this is a very slow process. Opportunities of exit should be encouraged as a safeguard, however imperfect, for members who cannot develop and find adequate avenues for self-expression within their native culture.

Solidarity

The final objection to multiculturalism is that it undermines social solidarity, which is invariably built on the possession of a common culture. Without a deep feeling of solidarity, a political society will disintegrate into quarreling factions. Solidarity is required if people are to feel concerned about each other's fortunes, and to be willing to make sacrifices for other people. Without such willingness the possibility of a peaceful political society disappears.

There is a lot of truth in this argument. Civic solidarity is essential to the existence of a well-ordered political society. But the argument is too quick in asserting that a common culture is essential to solidarity, and that multiculturalism is inconsistent with the existence of a common culture.

Let me take the last point first. The truth is that multiculturalism, while endorsing the perpetuation of several cultural groups in a single political society, also requires the existence of a common culture. First, coexistence calls for the cultivation of mutual toleration and respect. This affects the education of the young in all the constituent groups in the society. All of them will enjoy education in the cultural traditions of their own communities, but all of them will also be educated to understand and respect the traditions of the other groups in the society. This will apply to the majority group, where such a group exists, as well. Its young will learn the minority traditions of their society. Cultivation of mutual respect and tolerance, knowledge of the history and traditions of one's country with all its communities, will provide one element of a common culture.

A second element will result from the fact that members of all communities will interact in the same economic environment. They will share in tapping the same job market, the same market for services and for goods. This means that they will have to possess the same mathematical, literary, and other skills required for effective participation in the economy.

Finally, members of all cultural groups will belong to the same political society. They will enjoy roughly equal access to the sources of political power and to decision-making positions. They will have to acquire a common political language and conventions of conduct to be able to participate effectively in the competition for resources and the protection of group as well as individual interests in a shared political arena.

The emergence of such a common culture is still an aspiration, for while elements of it are already evident in some multicultural societies, none has reached the level of development of a common culture that is evident in some culturally homogeneous societies. Whether the sort of common culture I have outlined is capable of forming a basis for social solidarity sufficient to secure the cohesion and stability of

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modern political societies remains a moot point. But I think that it may serve this purpose successfully, and should be given a chance to do so.

But, while the liberal common culture of pluralistic societies remains to be developed, a swift social change toward multiculturalism may severely test the existing bonds of solidarity in a society and threaten disintegration or a backlash of rabid nationalism. This, while it does not pose an objection of principle to liberal multiculturalism, requires great caution in the method and speed with which multicultural policies are implemented.

Multiculturalism, in the sense of the existence within the same political society of a number of sizable cultural groups wishing and able to maintain their distinct identity, is with us to stay. It is likely to grow in size and importance. Liberal multiculturalism, as I call it, affirms that in the circumstances of contemporary industrial or postindustrial societies, a political attitude of fostering and encouraging the prosperity, cultural and material, of cultural groups within a society, and respecting their identity is justified by considerations of freedom and human dignity. These considerations call on governments to take action that goes beyond that required by policies of toleration and nondiscrimination. While incorporating policies of nondiscrimination, liberal multiculturalism transcends the individualistic approach and recognizes the importance of unimpeded membership in a respected and flourishing cultural group for individual well-being.

This doctrine has far-reaching ramifications. It calls on us to reconceive society, changing its self-image. We should learn to think of our societies as consisting not of a majority and minorities, but of a plurality of cultural groups. Naturally such developments take a long period to come to fruition, and they cannot be secured through government action alone, as they require a widespread change in attitude. The current attitude of the population at large, and the speed with which it accepts the precepts of multiculturalism set limits on the practicability and good sense of proceeding with various concrete policies to advance and implement liberal multiculturalism. But we must think of the long term to set short-term policies within a sensible context. The size of cultural groups and their viability also affect the way various concrete measures should be pursued. There is no point in trying to prop up by public action cultures that have become moribund and whose communities—usually their young members—drift away from them. Of course multiculturalism changes the prospects of survival for cultures it supports. That is its aim. But it recognizes that public policies can only serve to facilitate developments desired by the population, not to force cultural activities down the throats of an indifferent population.

The more concrete policies, which become appropriate gradually as developments justify them, include measures like the following:

(1) The young of all cultural groups should be educated, if their parents so desire, in the culture of their own groups. But all of them should also be educated to be familiar with and cultivate an attitude of respect for the history and traditions of all the cultures in the country.

(2) The customs and practices of the different groups should, within the limits of toleration we have explored earlier, be recognized in law and by all public bodies in society, as well as by private companies and organizations that serve the public. At the moment, petty intolerance is rife in many countries. In Britain people still have to fight to be allowed to wear traditional dress to school or to work, to give one example.

(3) It is crucial to break the link between poverty, under-education, and ethnicity. So long as certain ethnic groups are so overwhelmingly over-represented among poor, ill-educated, unskilled, and semiskilled workers, the possibilities of cultivating respect for their cultural identity, even the possibilities of self-respect, are greatly undermined.

(4) There should be generous public support for autonomous cultural institutions, such as communal charities, voluntary organizations, libraries, museums, and artistic groups. In the competition for public resources the size of the

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groups concerned is an important factor. It works in two ways. By and large, it favors the larger groups with a more committed membership. But it also calls for disproportionate support for small groups that are strong enough to pass the viability test. Given that the overheads are significant, the per capita cost of support for small groups is greater than for large ones.

(5) Public space (as well as air space on television) should accommodate all the cultural groups. Where they differ in their aesthetic sense, in their preferences for colors, patterns, smells, music, noise and speed, some public spaces may be divided between them, as often happens without direction in ethnic neighborhoods, while preserving others as common to all.

Of course, all such measures are designed to lead to relatively harmonious coexistence of non-oppressive and tolerant communities. They therefore have their limits. But it is important not to use false standards as tests of the limits of toleration. The fact that the Turkish government, say, does not tolerate certain practices of the Kurds in Turkey, is no reason why Kurds from Turkey should not be allowed to resume the practices when they settle in Europe. Similarly, the fact that tolerating certain immigrant practices will lead to changes in the character of some neighborhoods or public spaces in one's country is no reason for suppressing them. Toleration is limited only in denying communities the right to repress their own members, in discouraging intolerant attitudes to outsiders, in insisting on making exit from the community a viable option for its members. Beyond that, liberal multiculturalism will also require all groups to allow their members access to adequate opportunities for self-expression and full participation in the economic life and the political culture of the community.

The combined effect of such policies is that liberal multicultualism leads not to the abandonment of a common culture, but to the emergence of a new common culture that is respectful toward all the groups of the country, and hospitable to their prosperity. □

To Our Contributors:

A few suggestions:

(1) Be sure to keep a copy of your manuscript—the mails aren't always reliable. And please remember that we can't return articles unless they're accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

(2) Please don't write to ask whether we're interested in such and such an article—it makes for useless correspondence. Look at our last few issues to see if your idea fits in. Or take a chance and send us your article. We will not consider manuscripts submitted simultaneously to several publications.

(3) Type your ms *double-spaced*, with *wide* margins. Check all your figures, dates, names, etc.—they're the author's responsibility. No dot matrix submissions, *please*. Use WordPerfect 5.1 if possible. Please use inclusive language so that we don't have to make adjustments during editing.

(4) Notes and footnotes should also be typed double-spaced, on a *separate* sheet. As we're not an academic journal, we prefer that they, wherever possible, be dropped altogether or worked into the text.

(5) We're usually quick in giving editorial decisions. If there's a delay, it's because a few editors are reading your article.

(6) Please bear with us—we have accumulated quite a backlog of material, and you may have to wait for a few issues before you see your article in print.

THE EDITORS □

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Deborah Meier

A TALK TO TEACHERS

Editorial board member Deborah Meier is the founder and director of Central Park East, a group of alternative public schools in East Harlem that has won nationwide praise for its innovations and for its students' academic success. We print below a talk she gave to the teachers at the Central Park East Secondary School (CPESS) on the completion of the secondary school's eighth year.— EDS.

We're in a position both enviable and unenviable. Everyone, especially our allies, thinks we've created a kind of Camelot, the school of tomorrow. Not only is the school radically different than most, but our statistical success is impressive. In the city as a whole, only slightly over 50 percent of the students graduate from high school with regular diplomas, and less than 50 percent do it in four years. At CPESS, it's between 70 and 80 percent in four years, and 90 percent in five—virtually all of whom have gone on to college, mostly to four-year schools, and almost all of whom have made it through the first year and into the second. We look good. And we are. But. . . .

We know that though we've come a long way, we have a long way to go. The task is a task of at least a generation. We can only go as fast as we can go, and only change to the degree that we know how to change. We need to be concerned with the 20 to 30 percent who drop out, move, or transfer between ninth grade and graduation—kids most schools conveniently "disappear." What percentage of them graduate? Do they do better at other schools? Should they have stayed with us? What kind of standards did they meet elsewhere? And of those—less than 5 percent—who "drop out," could they have been saved if . . .? In our concern with the success of those we keep, have we missed something important about the minority who leave us?

And of those who do graduate from CPESS, as we focus on scoring grids and "standards," how are they doing in terms of such qualities as resilience, reliability, and sense of responsibility—what some of us have started to call the other 3 Rs? These are the habits of mind and character that will determine their future far more than SAT scores. As we reflect on our first eight years, we need to understand the context of our experiment—its larger social and educational dimensions—and simultaneously be aware of the particular history of reforms such as ours.

We are not the first to try. And if it were easy many more would have succeeded. What history tells us of such efforts is that there's an inexorable tendency to return to the norm—an almost inevitable inertia. The most ambitious sister effort—the eight-year study schools of the late 1930s—was a well-publicized, heavily supported, and hugely successful attempt to reshape high school in a manner not so dissimilar to ours. Barely a ripple remains of that work. Why? Each case history has its particulars. But they all also have commonalities. Teaching and keeping a school going involve countless small decisions, compromises, and negotiated crises. And in each such case the natural tendency is to reach for an answer from one's own experience, from the experience of friends and colleagues. Not only is that our natural tendency, but so is it that of the student and his or her family. We are not wrong in noticing the recurrent problems: too much lateness, kids not doing homework, not

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working hard enough, the absence of apparent consequences, our not knowing how to create an appropriate curriculum, and so on and so on. So we reinstitute grades, we start falling back on traditional textbooks, we impose detentions. We back away from our thematic approach, in which all subjects are combined, and we begin to de-integrate subject matter to return to sequential and often essentially tracked classes, to non-thematic courses. We eliminate independent study. Of course. Often such solutions are the wise ones. To do nothing may be worse than to fall back on old habits. And new habits don't yet exist.

But unless we occasionally wipe the slate clean and return to the original vision, these small ad hoc compromises will lead us back to the kind of school we are trying to replace. It's not any wonder that we think the answer lies in the old patterns; those are our internalized patterns too. It takes twice as much effort to break new ground and find alternative responses. And we don't always have twice as much energy and time.

If our story is to be different, it will be in part because we take this lesson to heart, and in part because we're living in an extraordinary moment when the political rhetoric that surrounds our work—especially among educational policy pundits—may be increasingly aligned with our own vision, when the number of our allies may be great enough not only to protect our work but enlarge it, and when we have an excellent reputation from some of the unlikeliest sources to fall back upon. But even with all this going for us, we are always in danger. The biggest danger is the inevitable tendency to revert to the norm.

So I want to provide a context for our work, and then to review the solution—the "idea"—we invented to respond to its difficulties, and to think again of new ways to tackle the initial plan. What we are trying to do is unprecedented. In my youth a majority of teenagers were not expected to graduate, and only a small number of the minority who did graduate went on to college. In 1946, the guru of American education, James Conant, declared to general acclaim that 20 percent of the population could benefit by a liberal arts college education (the "real thing"). Our high school system was designed to meet this conception: the education of a small elite fit for schooling, and of a somewhat larger number who were diligent enough to apply themselves to a watered-down version of the real thing, peppered by vocational training.

By the standards of this task, American public education has done a phenomenal job over the past generation. Our schools have accommodated to entirely new demands—brought forward first by the second- and third-generation white ethnics returning from war with the GI Bill, and then ten years later by African Americans. By 1970 the country had invented "dropouts." In a generation, we transformed the expectations of schools, but not yet their aspirations and working norms.

The schooling created for the old elite was itself an odd one. It grew out of a religious and scholastic European tradition that viewed an education in the nonpractical arts to be the highest distinction, the mark of a leisure class, the more esoteric the better. The sons of the powerful might become warriors or kings, landed aristocrats, or, at a later date, wealthy traders and adventurers—or they might become monks, scholars, rabbis. The academy was designed to be the place of training for the latter scholarly pursuits. Its traditions were gradually expanded to meet the needs of (or provide a thin layer of polish to) young aristocrats and then, later on, to the children of the new middle class.

The concept of a well-educated person doesn't naturally couple with the concept of an academic. At no time in the history of the world have most human beings taken to such "esoteric" delights. But as a device to weed out the less worthy, at no cost to the already powerful, it worked. And still does.

No wonder then that our schools are a disappointment and that so many have grown discouraged. They were not set up to succeed at the new tasks allotted them: to train every single kid to a high level of academic achievement in areas of study that have expanded exponentially even since the 1940s,

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and to require that they demonstrate by the age of eighteen that they know the subject matter of these manifold academic disciplines and are able also to prove their knowledge in the most sophisticated and persuasive ways—through high levels of skill as a writer, mathematician, researcher, technician, and so on. Wow!

And on the cheap.

And if they fail? Off with their heads, say some, while others propose that only the discipline of the marketplace—the privatization of our schools—will impose the necessary discipline on both the kids and their teachers.

We have not been willing, until recently, and then only tentatively, to reexamine the purpose and nature of our schools, so that their means and ends align better. If schools are to develop thoughtful citizens, productive employees, and life-long learners, then one big change is needed. The kids have to *want* to become well educated. Their own steam and energy and industry must be enlisted in the cause of learning, not just ours as teachers.

To quote Joseph Priestley on the occasion of the dedication of New College in London in 1794:

> Whatever be the qualifications of your tutors, your improvement must chiefly depend on yourselves. They cannot think or labor for you. They can only put you in the best way of thinking and laboring for yourselves. If, therefore, you get knowledge you must acquire it by your own industry. You must form all conclusions and all maxims for yourselves, from premises and data collected and considered by yourself. And it is the great object of this institution to remove every bias the mind may be under, and to give the greatest scope for true freedom of thinking and enquiry.

He has it all there: the goal—to become learners (not learn*ed* but a learn*er*) and the means—hard work under one's own steam.

What our students think about our enterprise is, as Priestly would have understood, at the heart of the matter. If it chiefly depends on their industry, then we must engage their industry; we must, if you will, "convert" them, so that they decide to join our club. But then we must be sure it's a club they might want to and think they are able to join.

My brother and I spent long hours watching baseball in our youth. We were equally avid Yankee fans. But with a difference. My brother's game improved by watching, but mine didn't. He watched as a future Yankee. He was there in body as well as spirit with each pitch, each slide to the plate, each leaping catch. I was there strictly as an observer, a devoted looker-on. He had joined the club; I hadn't dared imagine I could.

If the consequences for failure were serious enough, some proponents of more draconian high-stakes testing suggest, the kids would work hard—like it or not. We wouldn't have to enlist their imaginations. But I think the evidence is in. We've taken away almost everything we can from the lives of the uneducated, and 50 percent fall into the abyss anyway. And a majority of those who "succeed" have only gone through the motions.

They "choose" failure because they see no realistic alternative. All they can count on is their street smarts, and all they can hope for is a lucky break. The miracle, to me, is how many we talk into sticking it out. They can't buy in until they can taste what it is that we are claiming might lie on the other side. Trusting us that it's worth it is not sufficient. They have to experience it.

Some years ago, I was teaching a course to a group of adults at the college organized by District Council 37, a local public employees' union. I drove down to the college and listened to classical music on the way. Sometimes it was hard to drag myself away from a great piece to make the class on time. One day I failed—so exquisite was the Mozart quintet. I apologized when I arrived and explained why I was late. There was a dead silence. Finally one student asked, "Do you really listen to Mozart for pleasure?" She knew classical music was good for one's mind and was prepared to appreciate it dutifully. But she couldn't imagine the intense sensual pleasure I was describing emanating from such dry and remote sounds. We were both equally amazed.

So, in part, the kids don't want to be well-educated (although they'll try it, mind

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you) because they can't imagine what could be "wantable" about it. They recognize that a good education provides a credential—the first of many such credentials that will finally allow them to do something that they want, or might want, to do or anyway that will pay them a wage they know they'll need. Jobs and the good life require it, for obscure reasons. It's just a hoop you must jump through because it's good for you. Like listening to Mozart.

If being good at school comes naturally, it's a nuisance worth putting up with. After all, it brings praise, and being competent feels good. But if you're not good at it, it's one long arduous task, full of humiliation and confusion. Then the absence of a reason is cruel and unusual.

We aren't convincing because what we do in most schools bears little resemblance to anything that we can convince kids powerful adults do later on in their lives. That's a fact. We're sure they need the schooling, but the connection between schooling and success is at best unclear.

We make claims. "If you don't study history, you'll be doomed to repeat it." But do we really believe that historians are better able to set policy than nonhistorians? Do those who best know Yugoslavia's history arrive at similar conclusions about what went wrong or how it might be fixed? Are American historians more likely to give Clinton good advice than nonhistorians? Can we find any evidence that individuals or nations with a great deal of historical knowledge have been more successful, made fewer mistakes? I can think of a lot of evidence to the contrary. Ditto for literature, the arts, and math and science. Do the environmental decisions being made in nations whose kids do better on international science exams surpass ours? In fact, the claims for the value of academic education are based on the flimsiest evidence, given the mammoth nature of the enterprise, not to mention its cost.

The study of algebra is alternately based on claims that (1) it's good training for the mind, (2) that we need it to survive in modern society, or (3) that like it or not it's an essential gateway for more highly skilled jobs. Meanwhile most of us can't remember the last time we solved a problem using an algebraic equation. Tradition has made certain courses prerequisites for others—calculus before engineering, and so on. But few architects I know claim they've ever used the calculus that was a prerequisite for the architecture they do use.

These were not requirements created with the intention that all should meet them. Their purpose was precisely that all would not. Granted some small number might set their hearts on being college professors or scholarly researchers. It's one among many vocations that the young might set their hearts on. But surely, not even in our fondest dreams do teachers or the public expect that most students have such goals in mind. How many academics do we want? (And of course, what passes for academics in most high schools bears little resemblance to the real article anyway.)

That academics has become the path all children must pursue in order to meet their nonacademic aspirations—from engineer to lawyer to bookkeeper—is absurd. If we want to keep the academic traditions alive and healthy, to ensure that they continue to thrive so that they can feed all our other worldly and spiritual pursuits, there must be a cheaper and sounder way to do that.

We cannot get kids to want to be something we don't genuinely want them to be—and we should not have to pretend we want them all to become academics. What we do want them to be we must make real, tangible, believable, credible—and valued. If they are to devote twelve or more years of their life to it, it needs a damned good explanation.

Can one be intellectually competent and nonacademic? And curious—someone who asks, "How come?" and "Is it truly so?" Someone who is closely observant, open to patterns and details? Playful and imaginative? In the habit of imagining how others think, feel, and see the world; in the habit of stepping comfortably—even uncomfortably—into the shoes of others? Skeptical—with an open mind to other possibilities? Respectful of evidence and open to reason and discourse? Able to

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communicate carefully, persuasively, in a variety of media?

All this we can aim at. But I haven't said a word about the particular properties of specific academic disciplines. Academic disciplines are merely means, not ends. They have value because they *can* inform our intellects, not the other way around.

I'm not for watering down anything. In fact, it's as one who honors the real thing, that I don't want to water it down in the interests of stuffing it into all kids' heads. I want something intellectually honest in its own right.

If our definition of an educated person were broader, were we to see academics as one example of important intellectual activity, not a synonym for such activity—then we'd be asking different questions and finding different answers. It's not a question of vocational vs. academic but of a new category and a new terminology for using our minds well for what society agrees are worthy goals. Taking ideas seriously, persuading others, writing poetry, painting or sketching, gathering useful evidence, making important decisions, taking the time to understand the other person's viewpoint before rushing to condemn it—are such traits academic or vocational?

And the habits and dispositions that go with these broader goals—being reliable, someone you can count on, resilient, capable of dealing with frustration, not expecting certainties and absolutes—these are traits that are as critical to the academic vocations as to all other decent worthy human vocations. Including the vocation of citizen.

To honor these goals, we would need to create schools in which adults and children are jointly engaged in such efforts themselves. If I wanted to convince children to be good tennis players I'd be sure they had seen tennis played, and played well, and under circumstances that might arouse their joy and envy. And I'd be sure they had lots of opportunities to practice it with people who were in their own league and a little better—while continuing to be exposed to the real pros. And I'd provide lots of feedback. Video would be a blessing, and I'd wonder what they did in the good old days.

"Watch how you get around on that ball. See how you turned away. . . . Look at the racket." If I knew my students well, I'd also be wary of changing their unconventional backhands if they seemed to work well. The particular stroke would not remain long separated from its role in the game itself.

But we mostly ask students to learn to play a game they've never seen played and may never again see in their entire lives. We ask them to learn bits and pieces of it without ever having a chance to practice it whole. And we, their teachers, are often unsure about what the game is, rarely having had an opportunity to try it out ourselves. We have almost no time to pause and reflect about our work, much less confer with colleagues, sit back and observe, watch and wonder, model.

Unlike in the real world, teachers are usually the only audience of their students' work. There is no "real-world counterpart" to the "judging" that goes on in schools. And often we ourselves are only enforcers of the rules for scoring, not the real judges. We thus appear even more powerless than our students. And to make matters even worse, the academic game is one much maligned in our general culture, associated with decadence, effeteness, impracticality, nerdiness. It's even a bit suspect, a bit unAmerican.

For good as well as bad reasons, Americans have understood their genius to be based on effort, ingenuity, resilience, and street smarts. We have a healthy skepticism toward academic learning. It's okay in its place. Even the aristocratic student of Cambridge and Oxford preferred the "gentleman's C." And if this is true in general, it is even more true in certain subgroups—working-class men, for example, who see excelling in academia as something unmanly.

If we want a culture in which practicing with one's mind is as natural as practicing basketball, we need to redefine what we value in the use of our minds.

We've raised the ante, and we have offered no honorable escape hatches—no dignified alternative work and honor. Do we wonder

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then if kids create their own counterculture, their own escape hatches?

They're not lazy because they don't want to be successful, but because they don't get it. They don't believe they can get it. They don't see how hard work will pay off. They are left with either rage or despair, anger at us or at themselves. Two terrible choices with equally damaging consequences.

The oldest form of teaching—the one that every family practices—is built on apprenticeship. We apprentice kids to masters of the trade. Now schools must become communities in which mentor and novice—of various ages and stages—learn alongside each other. The school must be a place where adults are engaged if we are to engage the young. After all, the shoemaker's apprentice needs a real shoemaker. A cooking school surrounds its apprentices with cooks, and gives them real live diners to practice on.

Schools must be places where important questions are asked and important answers heard—including "Why are we studying this?" They must be places where real data are gathered and examined, real experimental activity carried out. In such settings kids don't have to be the equals of their faculty. But they will understand better that they are not lesser people, just less experienced people.

They must be party to the work going on—allowed to listen in, privy to its secrets, taken seriously, listened to, gradually assuming more and more rights and privileges as members-in-training of the school's ruling class—its faculty. Adults must represent something worthy of emulation. That means young people must be exposed to other adults besides teachers, whose enterprises suggest a continuum between the school and other adult enterprises. They must see adulthood as worthy, and teachers as part of that adulthood. They must want to grow up . . . not fear it. Not scorn it.

If only it were true that "once upon a time" we knew how to do all this, then we could just "do it" again. But we never did it. We just didn't pretend it was necessary. We gave "drop-outs" honorable jobs and the respect of their peers. We took it for granted that that higher education stuff wasn't for everybody, no shame to it.

If we're going to make kids stay in school, we need to be sure schooling isn't designed for shame. Our schools must be places to which every parent—including us—would willingly, if not gladly, send their own child.

And it was with just such a commitment in mind that we started CPESS in the fall of 1985. At our very first retreat, we committed ourselves to two propositions: first, we'd be a school designed for any and every kind of kid—with a particular commitment to those Latino and African-American youth least well served in New York. And, second, we would focus on developing demonstrable intellectual habits of mind—not the accumulation of course credits, coverage of academic domains, a list of discreet skills, or scores on norm-referenced tests.

We designed CPESS to be like the elementary school it grew out of—not course-based, but classroom-experience-based, at least for the first four years. As in the elementary school, students would spend two years with a small core of teachers, who would divide up the day in ways that they designed—including time for seminars, independent study, direct instruction, small group work, and so on—around a set of powerful interdisciplinary themes, selected to provide opportunities to internalize the habits of mind we most cherished, as well as related habits of work.

Following this four-year highly personalized core immersion, students would graduate into a transitional "Senior Institute" (SI) designed to prepare them for the world beyond. The preparation would be focused around a postgrad plan—a what-next-and-why plan—the successful presentation and defense of seven major and seven minor portfolios and a senior project. The postgrad plan was intended as an on-going record of the process of thinking and rethinking "Who am I?" "Where am I heading?" "How can I get there?" and finally "How am I doing?" While every diploma would represent some common requirements,

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each would also differ substantially depending on the student.

To get from "here" to "there," the assumption was that SI students would need as many different forms of support as there were students—including quite traditional college courses, less traditional courses at CPESS, classes at museums, independent study, small tutorials, internships, travel, you name it. All of which were intended to achieve the central task of the SI: to help kids take progressively riskier and more self-initiated steps that would prepare them for leaving us, under circumstances of relative safety and security.

We intended to communicate our confidence in their eventual capacity to meet the challenge, however long it took. We love you regardless; we are here for you forever; but you get our diploma only by earning it—by convincing us.

Not a single aspect of the process we envisioned worked out quite the way we expected. (And I'm leaving out the way we originally designed the foreign-language requirement, our expectations regarding music, and a variety of other things!)

We imagined that team teaching would make the task easier and richer, and would provide kids with authentic examples of adult intellectual sparring. We imagined classes of different lengths as these small teams of teachers tackled time creatively and flexibly—using the school as a base and venturing out often into the larger world. We imagined classes of different sizes, as needs arose or tasks suggested. We imagined kids creating clubs and student newspapers, putting on plays, and setting up art exhibits. We imagined opening up the lunch period for many options, beyond, but including, team sports. We imagined the library as an adjunct to all classes and the librarian as a closely connected member of the teaching staff. We imagined advisories as close-knit support groups whose members often ate together, went on trips together, and learned to know each other as people, not only as students and teachers.

We had to rethink each of these ideas, mostly on the spot. Over the years, our approach has become more formalized, less flexible; stronger in some ways, in terms of the depth of materials, work, and comfort. Was it necessary to toss so much away in the process? Dare we go back now and see what could be recouped?

The students were always testing us, worried about being guinea pigs and reassured when we reverted to form. We imagined them taking courses in museums and being involved in political activities in lieu of traditional courses, but didn't know how to support such work or make sure it wasn't a cop-out or demoralizing. We worried, and they did too, about what colleges would expect. We didn't know how to handle transcripts. We tried math courses that were based on activities of interest, and didn't quite know how to carry them out or how kids could study when we weren't working one-on-one with them. We worried about what message we were sending if we didn't monitor attendance; we didn't know if it was good or bad to call kids who skipped school. We didn't know whether we should be protective parents or more collegial allies.

In the end, we recreated a full-scale grading system where we had intended to have a pass/fail system. We gradually introduced more courses with traditional names and even textbooks. We got tougher on attendance and detentions and holding kids in after school, and assigning standard homework. Advisory trips became more of a chore and we thought about dropping them. Advisories seemed tough and so we considered giving grades or having curriculums—but held back. We did less and less teaming, especially with two teachers in the same room, and teachers saw less and less of the insides of each other's classes.

The list could go on. We back-tracked, side-stepped, hemmed and hawed, for very good reasons. We're trying to do something that has not been done before. It is like driving and trying to change the tire at the same time.

Naturally, the path of least resistance is easiest to follow, and we've often opted to do so. No big deal. Probably necessary and wise. We'll always be taking—at best—three bold steps forward and one back. It's when we take

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three back and one forward that we need to worry.

Thus, while the school is all about human relationships, we need to remind ourselves that the strategy we've selected is to organize these relationships around the stuff of life—the subject matter, ideas, projects, and work that we do together. We know each other through our shared work and interests. Us and the kids. We're proposing that our students and our faculty *can* do good work—and that this is a safe place to initiate, organize, and reflect upon how to do such good work.

"Show me," we say. "You have time. You'll get it, eventually. Try again." But we're also here to stir, tease out, support, coach, and nourish every strength, interest, passion, curiosity, and nascent talent we observe. We need to find ways to see each kid respectfully, not only for what they might become but for what they *are*. For every sign of resilience under trial, reliability, resourcefulness, humor and grace.

We need to keep our eye on the most vulnerable—the ones it's easier to overlook—for whom courses are often the least successful learning strategy. Novices, throughout history, learn best from participating at their own pace alongside experts at something they want to be good at. Finding ways to do this will come slowly—in some cases, one kid at a time.

We need to keep going back to that original dream and seeing whether expediency hasn't led us to be slightly less than we are capable of being. The mantra "All children can learn" is either a truism or an incomplete sentence—can, or will, learn what?

If we mean that all children will learn to be shapers of their own destiny, active agents of their own learning, then we still have a long way to go. And we need to make an honest case that what we want all kids to learn is worth learning. The trouble with our ad hoc compromises is that they sometimes block such self-definition, and in the name of support undermine self-generative activity.

I know of few schools that have been more unflinchingly honest at trying to do the impossible; we have much to celebrate in our success—as well as much to do. Not the least of which is to keep alive the conversation about what the task is, not only about how to do it. And not to be surprised or discouraged at the stubborn fact that it's a slippery business. A messy one.

But fortunately—never a boring one. □

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Iris Marion Young

MAKING SINGLE MOTHERHOOD NORMAL

When Dan Quayle denounced Murphy Brown for having a baby without a husband in May 1992, most liberals and leftists recognized it for the ploy it was: a Republican attempt to win an election by an irrational appeal to "tradition" and "order." To their credit, American voters did not take the bait. The Clinton campaign successfully turned the family values rhetoric against the GOP by pointing to George Bush's veto of the Family and Medical Leave Act and by linking family well-being to economic prosperity.

Nonetheless, family values rhetoric has survived the election. Particularly disturbing is the fact that the refrain has been joined by people who, by most measures, should be called liberals, but who can accept only the two-parent heterosexual family. Communitarians are leading the liberal chorus denouncing divorce and single motherhood. In *The Spirit of Community*, Amitai Etzioni calls for social measures to privilege two-parent families and encourage parents to take care of young children at home. Etzioni is joined by political theorist William Galston—currently White House adviser on domestic policy—in supporting policies that will make divorce more difficult. Jean Bethke Elshtain is another example of a social liberal—that is, someone who believes in state regulation of business, redistributive economic policies, religious toleration and broad principles of free speech—who argues that not all kinds of families should be considered equal from the point of view of social policy or moral education. William Julius Wilson, another academic who has been close to Democratic party policy makers, considers out-of-wedlock birth to be a symptom of social pathology and promotes marriage as one solution to problems of urban black poverty.

Although those using family values rhetoric rarely mention gays and lesbians, this celebration of stable marriage is hardly good news for gay and lesbian efforts to win legitimacy for their lives and relationships. But I am concerned here with the implications of family values rhetoric for another despised and discriminated-against group: single mothers. Celebrating marriage brings a renewed stigmatization of these women, and makes them scapegoats for social ills of which they are often the most serious victims. The only antidote to this injustice is for public policy to regard single mothers as normal, and to give them the social supports they need to overcome disadvantage.

Most people have forgotten another explicit aim of Dan Quayle's appeal to family values: to "explain" the disorders in Los Angeles in May 1992. Unmarried women with children lie at the source of the "lawless social anarchy" that sends youths into the streets with torches and guns. Their "welfare ethos" impedes individual efforts to move ahead in society.

Liberal family values rhetoric also finds the "breakdown" of "the family" to be a primary cause of all our social ills. "It is not an exaggeration," says Barbara Dafoe Whitehead in the *Atlantic* (April 1993) "to characterize [family disruption] as a central cause of many of our most vexing social problems, including

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poverty, crime, and declining school performance." Etzioni lays our worst social problems at the door of self-indulgent divorced or never-married parents. "Gang warfare in the streets, massive drug abuse, a poorly committed workforce, and a strong sense of entitlement and a weak sense of responsibility are, to a large extent, the product of poor parenting." Similarly, Galston attributes fearsome social consequences to divorce and single parenthood. "The consequences of family failure affect society at large. We all pay for systems of welfare, criminal justice, and incarceration, as well as for physical and mental disability; we are all made poorer by the inability or unwillingness of young adults to become contributing members of society; we all suffer if our society is unsafe and divided."

Reductionism in the physical sciences has faced such devastating criticism that few serious physicists would endorse a theory that traced a one-way causal relationship between the behavior of a particular sort of atom and, say, an earthquake. Real-world physical phenomena are understood to have many mutually conditioning forces. Yet here we have otherwise subtle and intelligent people putting forward the most absurd social reductionism. In this simplistic model of society, the family is the most basic unit, the first cause that is itself uncaused. Through that magical process called socialization, families cause the attitudes, dispositions, and capacities of individual children who in turn as adults cause political and economic institutions to work or not work.

The great and dangerous fallacy in this imagery, of course, is its implicit assumption that non-familial social processes do not cause family conditions. How do single-mother families "cause" poverty, for example? Any sensible look at some of these families shows us that poverty is a cause of their difficulties and failures. Doesn't it make sense to trace some of the conflicts that motivate divorce to the structure of work or to the lack of work? And what about all the causal influences on families and children over which parents have very little control—peer groups, dilapidated and understaffed schools, consumer culture, television and movie imagery, lack of investment in neighborhoods, cutbacks in public services? Families unprotected by wide networks of supportive institutions and economic resources are bound to suffer. Ignoring the myriad social conditions that affect families only enables the government and the public to escape responsibility for investing in the ghettos, building new houses and schools, and creating the millions of decent jobs that we need to restore millions of people to dignity.

Family-values reductionism scapegoats parents, and especially single parents, and proposes a low-cost answer to crime, poverty, and unemployment: get married and stay married.

Whitehead, Galston, Etzioni, and others claim that there is enough impressive evidence that divorce harms children emotionally to justify policies that discourage parents from divorcing. A closer look at the data, however, yields a much more ambiguous picture. One meta-analysis of ninety-two studies of the effects of divorce on American children, for example, finds statistically insignificant differences between children of divorced parents and children from intact families in various measures of well-being.[1] Many studies of children of divorce fail to compare them to children from "intact" families, or fail to rule out predivorce conditions as causes. A ten-year longitudinal study released in Australia last June found that conflict between parents—whether divorced or not—is a frequent cause of emotional distress in children. This stress is mitigated, however, if the child has a close supportive relationship with at least one of the parents.[2] Results also suggest that Australia's stronger welfare state and less adversarial divorce process may partly account for differences with U.S. findings.

Thus the evidence that divorce produces lasting damage to children is ambiguous at best, and I do not see how the ambiguities can be definitively resolved one way or the other. Complex and multiple social causation makes it naive to think we can conclusively test for a clear causal relationship between divorce and children's well-being. Without such certainty, however, it is wrong to suggest that the liberty

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of adults in their personal lives should be restricted. Galston and Etzioni endorse proposals that would impose a waiting period between the time a couple applied for divorce and the beginning of divorce proceedings. Divorce today already often drags on in prolonged acrimony. Children would likely benefit more from making it easier and less adversarial.

Although many Americans agree with me about divorce, they also agree with Quayle, Wilson, Galston, and others that single motherhood is undesirable for children, a deviant social condition that policy ought to try to correct. Etzioni claims that children of single parents receive less parental supervision and support than do children in two-parent families. It is certainly plausible that parenting is easier and more effective if two or more adults discuss the children's needs and provide different kinds of interactions for them. It does not follow, however, that the second adult must be a live-in husband. Some studies have found that the addition of any adult to a single-mother household, whether a relative, lover, or friend, tends to offset the tendency of single parents to relinquish decision making too early.[3] Stephanie Coontz suggests that fine-tuned research on single-parent families would probably find that they are better for children in some respects and worse in others. For example, although adults in single-parent families spend less time supervising homework, single parents are less likely to pressure their children into social conformity and more likely to praise good grades.[4]

Much less controversial is the claim that children in single-parent families are more often poor than those in two-parent families. One should be careful not to correlate poverty with single-parenthood, however; according to Coontz, a greater part of the increase in family poverty since 1979 has occurred in families with both spouses present, with only 38 percent concentrated in single-parent families. As many as 50 percent of single-parent families are likely to be poor, which is a shocking fact, but intact two-parent families are also increasingly likely to be poor, especially if the parents are in their twenties or younger.[5]

It is harder to raise children alone than with at least one other adult, and the stresses of doing so can take their toll on children. I do not question that children in families that depend primarily on a woman's wage-earning ability are often disadvantaged. I do question the conclusion that getting single mothers married is the answer to childhood disadvantage.

Conservatives have always stated a preference for two-parent families. Having liberals join this chorus is disturbing because it makes such preference much more mainstream, thus legitimizing discrimination against single mothers. Single mothers commonly experience credit and employment discrimination. Discrimination against single mothers in renting apartments was legal until 1988, and continues to be routine in most cities. In a study of housing fairness in Pittsburgh in which I participated, most people questioned said that rental housing discrimination is normal in the area. Single mothers and their children also face biases in schools.[6]

There is no hope that discrimination of this sort will ever end unless public discourse and government policy recognize that female-headed families are a viable, normal, and permanent family form, rather than something broken and deviant that policy should eradicate. Around one-third of families in the United States are headed by a woman alone; this proportion is about the same world-wide. The single-mother family is not going to fade away. Many women raise children alone because their husbands left them or because lack of access to contraception and abortion forced them to bear unwanted children. But many women are single mothers by choice. Women increasingly initiate divorces, and many single mothers report being happier after divorce and uninterested in remarriage, even when they are poorer.

Women who give birth out of wedlock, moreover, often have chosen to do so. Discussion of the "problem" of "illegitimate" births commonly assumes the image of the irresponsible and uneducated teenager (of color) as the unwed mother. When citing statistics about rising rates of out-of-wedlock

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birth, journalists and scholars rarely break them down by the mother's age, occupation, and so on. Although the majority of these births continue to be to young mothers, a rising proportion are to mid-life women with steady jobs who choose to have children. Women persist in such choices despite the fact that they are stigmatized and sometimes punished for them.

In a world where it can be argued that there are already too many people, it may sometimes be wrong for people to have babies. The planned birth of a third child in a stable two-parent family may be morally questionable from this point of view. But principles of equality and reproductive freedom must hold that there is nothing *more* wrong with a woman in her thirties with a stable job and income having a baby than with a similar married couple.

If teen pregnancy is a social problem, this is not because the mothers are unmarried, but because they are young. They are inexperienced in the ways of the world and lack the skills necessary to get a job to support their children; once they become parents, their opportunities to develop those skills usually decrease. But these remain problems even when the women marry the young men with whom they have conceived children. Young inexperienced men today are just as ill prepared for parenting and just as unlikely to find decent jobs.

Although many young unmarried women who bear children do so because they are effectively denied access to abortions, many of these mothers want their babies. Today the prospects for meaningful work and a decent income appear dim to many youth, and especially to poor youth. Having a baby can give a young woman's life meaning, earn her respectful attention, make her feel grown up, and give her an excuse to exit the "wild" teenager scene that has begun to make her uncomfortable. Constructing an education and employment system that took girls as seriously as boys, that trained girls and boys for meaningful and available work would be a far more effective antidote to teen birth than reprimanding, stigmatizing, and punishing these girls.

Just as we should examine the assumption that something is wrong with a mid-life woman having a child without a husband, so we ought to ask a more radical question: just what *in principle* is *more* wrong in a young woman's bearing a child without a husband than in an older woman's doing so? When making their reproductive decisions, everyone ought to ask whether there are too many people in the world. Beyond that, I submit that we should affirm an unmarried young woman's right to bear a child as much as any other person's right.

There is reason to think that much of the world, including the United States, has plural childbearing cultures. Recently I heard a radio interview with an eighteen-year-old African-American woman in Washington, D.C. who had recently given birth to her second child. She affirmed wanting both children, and said that she planned to have no more. She lives in a subsidized apartment and participates in a job training program as a condition for receiving AFDC. She resisted the interviewer's suggestion that there was something morally wrong or at least unfortunate with her choices and her life. She does not like being poor, and does not like having uncertain child care arrangements when she is away from her children. But she believes that in ten years, with hard work, social support, and good luck, she will have a community college degree and a decent job doing something she likes, as does her mother, now thirty-four.

There is nothing in principle wrong with such a pattern of having children first and getting education and job training later. Indeed, millions of white professional women currently in their fifties followed a similar pattern. Most of them, of course, were supported by husbands, and not state subsidy, when they stayed home to take care of their young children. Our racism, sexism, and classism are only thinly concealed when we praise stay-at-home mothers who are married, white, and middle class, and propose a limit of two years on welfare to unmarried, mostly non-white,

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and poor women who do the same thing. From a moral point of view, is there an important difference between the two kinds of dependence? If there is any serious commitment to equality in the United States, it must include an equal respect for people's reproductive choices. In order for children to have equal opportunities, moreover, equal respect for parents, and especially mothers, requires state policies that give greater support to some than others.

If we assume that there is nothing morally wrong with single-mother families, but that they are often disadvantaged by lack of child care and by economic discrimination and social stigma, then what follows for public policy? Some of the answers to this question are obvious, some not so obvious, but in the current climate promoting a stingy and punitive welfare state, all bear discussion. I will close by sketching a few proposals.

1. *There is nothing in principle any more wrong with a teenage woman's choice to have a child than with anyone else's.* Still, there is something wrong with a society that gives her few alternatives to a mothering vocation and little opportunity for meaningful job training. If we want to reduce the number of teenage women who want to have babies, then education and employment policies have to take girls and women much more seriously.

2. *Whether poor mothers are single because they are divorced or because they never married, it is wrong for a society to allow mothers to raise children in poverty and then tell them that it's their fault when their children have deprived lives.* Only if the economy offered women decent-paying jobs, moreover, would forcing welfare women to get jobs lift them out of poverty. Of course, with good job opportunities most of them would not need to be forced off welfare. But job training and employment programs for girls and women must be based on the assumption that a large proportion of them will support children alone. Needless to say, there is a need for massive increases in state support for child care if these women are to hold jobs. Public policy should, however, also acknowledge that taking care of children at home is work, and then support this work with unstigmatized subsidy where necessary to give children a decent life.

3. *The programs of schools, colleges, and vocational and professional training institutions ought to accommodate a plurality of women's life plans, combining childbearing and child-rearing with other activities.* They should not assume that there is a single appropriate time to bear and rear children. No woman should be disadvantaged in her education and employment opportunities because she has children at age fifteen, twenty-five, thirty-five, or forty-five (for the most part, education and job structures are currently such that each of these ages is the "wrong time").

4. *Public policy should take positive steps to dispel the assumption that the two-parent heterosexual nuclear family is normal and all other family forms deviant.* For example, the state should assist single-parent support systems, such as the "mothers' houses" in some European countries that provide spaces for shared child minding and cooking while at the same time preserving family privacy.

5. *Some people might object that my call for recognizing single motherhood as normal lets men off the hook when it comes to children.* Too many men are running out on pregnant women and on the mothers of their children with whom they have lived. They are free to seek adventure, sleep around, or start new families, while single mothers languish in poverty with their children. This objection voices a very important concern, but there are ways to address it other than forcing men to get or stay married to the mothers of their children.

First, the state should force men who are not poor themselves to pay child support for children they have recognized as theirs. I see nothing wrong with attaching paychecks and bank accounts to promote this end. But the objection above requires more than child support. Relating to children is a good thing in itself. Citizens who love and are committed to some particular children are more apt than others to think of the world in the long term, and to see it from the perspective of the more vulnerable people. Assuming that around one-third of households will continue to be

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headed by women alone, men should be encouraged to involve themselves in close relationships with children, not necessarily their biological offspring.

6. *More broadly, the American public must cease assuming that support and care for children are the responsibility of their parents alone, and that parents who require social support have somehow failed.* Most parents require social support, some more than others. According to Coontz, for a good part of American history this fact was assumed. I am not invoking a Platonic vision of communal childrearing; children need particular significant others. But non-parents ought to take substantial economic and social responsibility for the welfare of children.

After health care, Clinton's next big reform effort is likely to be aimed at welfare. Condemning single mothers will legitimate harsh welfare reforms that will make the lives of some of them harder. The left should press instead for the sorts of principles and policies that treat single mothers as equal citizens. □

Notes

[1] P.R. Amato and B. Keith, "Parental divorce and the well-being of children: a meta-analysis," *Psychological Bulletin* 110, (1), 1991, pp. 26–46.

[2] Rosemary Dunlop and Alisa Burns, "The Sleeper Effect—Myth or Reality?—Findings from a ten-year study of the effects of parental divorce at adolescence." Presented at the Fourth Australian Family Research Conference, Manly, New South Wales, February 1993.

[3] Nan Marie Astone and Sara McLanahan, "Family Structure and High School Completion: The Role of Parental Practices," Institute for Research on Poverty Discussion Paper no. 905-9; Madison, WI, 1989.

[4] Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were* (Basic Books, 1992).

[5] Coontz, op. cit., pp. 259–60.

[6] In the work cited above, Astone and McLanahan found that teachers treated children differently if they believed that they came from "broken" homes.

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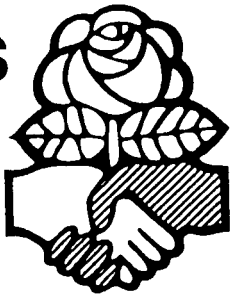

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Donald Sassoon

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND THE EUROPE OF TOMORROW

By the late 1950s all West European socialist and social democratic parties (I shall use the terms interchangeably) had abandoned in practice, and some in theory too, the idea of socialism as an "end-state" or "final goal." What had been short-term aims in the pre-1914 programs of social democracy had now become the only goals: income redistribution, equality and social justice, full employment, the welfare state and the mixed economy. To achieve these objectives it was thought necessary to control the nation-state and its "sovereign" administrative machine. Today this conception is bankrupt: the epoch of construction of social democracy in one country has come to a close. The last attempt in this direction, the French socialist government of 1981–83, provided the resting place for the political ambitions of national social democracy.

Inside the European Community (EC), the irreversibility of interdependence is now widely accepted. Even among nationalists, at least in Europe, economic integration is celebrated because it allows for the viability of new—and sometimes very small—states. On the social democratic left, nonetheless, although there is plenty of Europeanist rhetoric, there is no European strategy. Instead, we have hybrid "national strategies" that seek to defend national interests within an integrated Europe-wide community. This national obsession is inevitable. Politics is still predominantly *national* politics. Elections are for a *national* parliament. Parties face a *national* electorate. As long as there are no really democratic pan-European institutions, as long as the European Parliament has limited powers, there will not be an institutional framework for the full development of a European strategy.

How should European social democrats think about European integration? First of all, they will have to recognize that national differences and conflicting interests will persist for a long time. To be effective, social democratic strategy must build on traditional social democratic commitments, that is, to welfare reforms and full employment within a regulated market economy under the direction of democratic institutions—whether at the national or European level.

The likely enlargement of the EC to include Sweden, Norway, Austria, and Finland will create the largest and richest market in the world: 360 million consumers in 16 countries. The creation of a single market with a single currency, the establishment of a common commercial law, the elimination of many physical barriers to trade, the erection of common European technical standards, of Community-wide public procurement markets, and the end of transaction costs cannot fail to bring about major economic gains (though these are unlikely to be distributed according to any equitable criteria). But there is a big "if." The process of ratifying the Maastricht Treaty has been far longer and more painful than expected; its outcome is still uncertain. In France, the driving force behind the treaty, only a tiny majority approved it. Two referenda were required to bamboozle the Danish electorate into acquiescence. The Norwegian electorate will prove as recalcitrant as the Danish

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when they are asked to ratify Norwegian entry. Britain, whose government openly aspires to be Europe's Taiwan, has opted out of the Maastricht's social protocol. And a significant majority of Labour and Conservative supporters in Britain are against further European integration.

What of Eastern Europe?

Outside the prosperous borders of Western Europe, in Eastern and Central Europe, the situation could not be more unstable. Two major scenarios are currently envisaged.

On one hand, the Eastern economies may be turned into free-enterprise areas dominated by a savage and primitive capitalism, characterized by low wages, supervised by more or less stable semi-authoritarian governments—a Slavic variant of Taiwan and South Korea—with a lower level of productivity and regulation than the newly industrialized Asian countries.

On the other hand, there might be an economic disaster that will bring about severe social tension, massive pressures for emigration, nationalist persecutions, and political and social upheavals as unpredictable as they are dangerous.

If the first scenario is unpalatable, the second is intolerable. Some conservatives, however, will find the first quite positive. For them, a period of backwardness seasoned by a local version of Victorian values, a few carrots and plenty of sticks, low wages and hard work: this is the necessary premise, the preparatory Purgatory for a better future. Superior to the communist Hell, this prospect opens the way to the distant but heavenly delights of consumer capitalism.

Social democracy is then faced with a critical dilemma. If the Twelve proceed with the construction of a "social democratic" European space, that is, an integration of their welfare systems "upward" on the basis of environmentally regulated growth, it will be even more difficult than it is now to absorb the Eastern and Central European economies into an expanded EC. Ecologically directed growth, high wage costs, and high taxation in the West would redirect labor-intensive, low-productivity investment toward the East. This would seriously damage any prospect for a return of full employment in Western Europe or the maintenance of existing levels of social protection. It would enable the European right, led by Britain's Conservative government, to destroy the welfare state by deregulating the labor market to conform to the American model. And this, of course, would increase the obstacles to social reform in the United States.

The alternative to a movement of capital from West to East is large-scale labor migration from East to West. But the consequences of this would be untold social problems on both halves of the continent. It would eliminate the possibility of a return to full employment in Western Europe, severely weaken trade unions, contain wages, and narrow dramatically the fiscal reserves available for expanded social programs. Low wages in the East would not provide sufficient demand for a growth of manufacturing in the West. The free-market scenario for the East is a disaster for social democracy on both sides of the former iron curtain. Western socialists, who have had nothing to say to a potential democratic socialist movement in the East, ignore these issues at their peril.

There is no simple way out of the dilemma. The most realistic alternative is to give the electorate in the East a reason to support social democrats or their equivalent in their own countries. At present, East Europeans imagine the West to be a colossal shopping mall, the successful result of free enterprise. The century-long struggle of the European left for political regulation and social reform of the economy is forgotten. This conservative image of capitalism must be challenged: access to the EC and to the possibility of a Western life-style should require (since it in fact depends on) not only acceptance of a market and democratic institutions, but also social rights, full employment, non-discrimination, and qualitative growth.

In insisting on this social dimension of European economic integration, the West European left would strengthen emerging social democratic forces in the East, struggling to halt the development of an untrammeled market economy. The precondition for success, of course, is that the social dimension must

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GLOSSARY

European Economic Community, now known as **European Community (EC):** Established by the Treaty of Rome (1957) by France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. Great Britain, Denmark and Ireland joined in 1973, Greece in 1981, and Spain and Portugal in 1986.

The Commission of the EC is the EC's executive, the collective name for the seventeen commissioners (two from the larger five countries, one from each of the others). Each commissioner has responsibility for a specific area. Though the commission can initiate policy and has considerable political weight, real power rests with the Council of Ministers. Its current head is Jacques Delors.

The Council of Ministers is the supreme decision-making body of the community. It is made up of one minister from each country, usually the foreign minister, but it may consist of the agricultural ministers if agriculture is being discussed, or the finance ministers. The council takes the final decision to adopt a proposal. The council is chaired by the minister of the country that holds the presidency. This rotates every six months.

The European Parliament is elected by universal suffrage. It sits in Strasbourg. Each member country sends a number of deputies according to population (Germany has the largest representation, Luxembourg the smallest). Since the European Parliament is devoid of serious power, it is generally accepted to be the most significant instance of the so-called "democratic deficit" of the EC. The EP can make recommendations but the commission is not obliged to accept any. However, the EP can block legislation and the budget. It has also the power—never used so far—to dismiss the commission.

The Maastricht Treaty was finally ratified in 1993. It is made up of two parts: the EMU and the EPU.

EMU stands for **Economic and Monetary Union**, which describes a process leading to the establishment of a common European currency in place of the twelve national ones, a common monetary policy, and a single European central bank. This is supposed to be in place by 1999. Only countries whose economies converge will be able to join.

EPU stands for **European Political Union**, which is supposed to establish European citizenship, voting rights in local elections for all nationals of member countries, and a common foreign policy. This is the most controversial section of Maastricht and has encountered fierce opposition in Britain and Denmark.

The Social Protocol is attached to the Maastricht Treaty and involves the setting of minimum standards for workers' protection, such as minimum wage and length of the working week. Britain alone has opted out of this.

ECU stands for **European Currency Unit** and is the basic monetary unit used in community transactions. Its value is a weighted average basket of EC currencies on the basis of the relative importance of each national economy (consequently the deutsche mark counts for about half). If economic and monetary union were to become reality, the **ECU** would be the European currency.

ERM stands for **Exchange Rate Mechanism**. Member states of the ERM keep the value of their currencies within an agreed band in relation to each other. Until July 1993 the permitted divergence was 2 1/2 percent. Following the wave of speculation of September 1992 Britain and Italy left the system while the Spanish peseta and the Portuguese escudo participated in a wider 6 percent band. In July 1993, as the speculators' attack on the French franc intensified, the system was drastically revised, enlarging the permitted band of fluctuation to 15 percent. Some commentators have argued, quite reasonably, that such a wide band negates the whole purpose of an exchange rate system.

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become the center of the EC's agenda. This is not the case at present. Thus the contest for a social space in the EC, far from being a merely internal matter, is a new form of internationalism. It would offer to Eastern and Central Europe and, indeed, the rest of the world, the model of an advanced society radically different from the neoliberalism peddled by the IMF (International Monetary Fund). It would offer a society in which the values of solidarity prevail over the cacophony of cash registers.

European Monetary Union

To what extent are social democratic principles embedded in the economic and political plans agreed to at Maastricht? Careful textual analysis of the treaties is unlikely to reveal any significant social content. The Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the European Political Union (EPU) treaties are in fact asymmetrical. EMU is a carefully constructed document with clear goals and the institutional mechanisms for achieving them—however shaky things may seem after the exchange-rate crisis of the summer of 1993. The EPU is a much more modest document full of good intentions: "harmonious and balanced development of economic activities," "non-inflationary growth respecting the environment," "raising standards of living." The more it reaches toward a social democratic agenda the vaguer EPU becomes: the EC will have "a policy in the sphere of the environment," will contribute to the "attainment of a high level of health protection," will contribute to "education and training of high quality," "to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States" and so on. The Social Protocol, binding on all except the British, is not a charter but a framework for action on social security, social protection and some aspects of industrial relations.

EMU offers a sharp contrast to the generalities of EPU. Its "primary objective" is price stability. Its guiding principle is "the open market economy with free competition." Other goals are sound public finances and sustainable balance of payments. It stipulates that the economic policies of member states must be consistent with these guidelines. Their adherence to them will be supervised by a European Central Bank whose independence is established in no uncertain terms: it receives no instructions from the EC's council or the commission or the various national governments. The primary objective of price stability is thus completely removed from everyday political debate, making it impossible to deny that inflation, at a particular moment, is a more serious threat than unemployment. The anti-inflationary guiding principle is thus a constraint on national as well as supranational policies.

One may ponder why inflation is regarded as such an evil when everyone knows how complex it is to identify the winners and the losers. Leaving aside the issue of hyper-inflation, whose disastrous consequences are obvious, it is not clear why a modicum of inflation is regarded as such a threat to economic stability as to warrant the privileged treatment it receives in the EMU treaty. Pensioners and others on fixed incomes could be protected by linking their benefits to the inflation rate. Unstable prices are not necessarily a cause of concern for investors—what worries them are adverse changes in relative prices, and what is adverse for one may be helpful to others.

It is no secret that the pledge on price stability was due more to political and "cultural" than to economic factors. Without it Germany would never have accepted EMU, as the French realized. Should EMU ever come into being, however, a large part of European trade will be "domestic," that is, within the European Community. Would inflation be as bad in such a large market as it may have been in a far more exposed and smaller national economy? Some 59 percent of the trade of member states is with other member states. This proportion of intra-regional trade will certainly grow, making the EC more "introverted" than the United States or Japan. Furthermore the clout of the EC in world trade will be greater than that of any other trading bloc.

Anti-inflationary paranoia may turn out to be temporary. If a large continental trading bloc is established, the price competitiveness of Euro-

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pean exports will not matter as much as it does now to the individual states. In relatively small export-dependent countries such as the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, not to mention Sweden and Austria, inflation causes a systematic increase in the price of export items and hence balance of payments problems. In a large trading bloc, in which all transactions are conducted with a single currency, there is less dependence on external trade. The balance of payments is less important; an increase in prices affects only the competitiveness of those firms that export out of the bloc. Thus a reasonable level of inflation (say, below 10 percent) would not cause excessive worry. It is possible that the priority given to the anti-inflationary battle belongs to a phase of transition from the nation-state to the integrated continental bloc. Emphasis on price stability as an indicator of successful government economic performance has not been produced "spontaneously" by the electorate. It has been constructed through a political debate. Other performance indicators have been assigned a subordinate role: growth rates, balance of payments, and unemployment, not to speak of infant mortality, number of university graduates, crime rates, pollution levels, toxicity of tap water, literacy, health, and so on. In politics, the dominant groups set the agenda.

Commitment to price stability requires constraints on national economic decision making. Price stability is only one of the five criteria of "convergence" (required of EC member states) established by the EMU. Members must also align their long-term interest rates, national budget deficits, public debt ratio and exchange rates. The chances of all twelve accomplishing this by 1997 are slim. Britain and Italy have left the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM). Portugal, Italy and Greece do not satisfy any of the five criteria. Budget deficits in Italy, Greece and Belgium are horrendous. Inflation in Germany and Holland is too high. The ERM was in danger of final collapse after the wave of speculation against the French frame in July 1993. Although everyone in Brussels (the EC's unofficial capital) is busy denying it, the most likely prospect is a two-tier Europe centered on a Franco-German monetary area plus the Benelux countries. (And possibly Sweden and Austria when they join the EC.) The dream of a united Europe will recede for a while. But should the left dream this dream?

Unequal Development

Let us imagine that, by 1999, all twelve EC members are part of the single-currency area with, perhaps, the currencies of the other West European states converging into an ERM-type mechanism. Within the EC there are no more national currencies. All transactions are in ECU. Within Europe there will be no further balance-of-payment problems in the same way as Idaho or Alabama or Bavaria or Yorkshire have no balance-of-payment problems. Similarly there will no longer be intra-European "interest rate problems," for the obvious reason that the depositors will be faced with an ECU market competing with the yen and the dollar. Foreign-exchange currency storms, such as that of September 1992, which blew British sterling and the Italian lira off course or that of July 1993, which nearly destroyed the ERM, will be far less likely because speculators will not be able to gang up against individual currencies, which will no longer exist. There will be, at the European level, a different, potentially far more serious, issue: the exacerbation of regional variations. In the absence of any guiding criteria (other than price stability) these differences will become the fundamental issues in the internal politics of the EC. Talk about budgetary and monetary convergence conceals the enormity of the existing differences: in 1991 the unemployment rate was 24 percent in southern Spain but only 2.7 percent in Baden-Wurttemberg. This ten-to-one ratio is about twice the U.S. spread. In other words regional unemployment variations in Europe are 100 percent more severe than in the USA.

What will this European Community look like? As a peculiar multinational state, it will have constituent "sub-states" (for want of a better term), some coterminous with a nation (for example, Denmark, most of France and Italy) and some multinational in themselves (such as Britain and Spain). Some national

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governments will face considerable differentiations of income and wealth within their borders. In some instances, an entire nation might find the gap between itself and more prosperous lands increasing. In other words the unequal growth that has characterized the internal development of most European countries will be reproduced on the European level.

Historically, nations facing these problems have been able to defuse discontent either by repression or by ensuring that the whole population had equal political rights. Democratic institutions forced national politicians to adopt measures aimed at resolving regional problems. These policies required expenditure to modify the disguised terms of trade within the country: tax incentives, direct grants, subsidies, special programs. Equality of social rights meant that the depressed areas had a good chance of obtaining a higher degree of welfare funding than the others. Residents of more prosperous areas sanctioned, grudgingly perhaps, the fiscal implications of this policy, for example, higher taxes. This was sustainable so long as the nation formed some sort of community.

What was a tolerable grumble by taxpayers in the prosperous sixties became a generalized cry of outrage in the seventies and eighties. Even within national communities, solidarity is not a strong currency: many West Germans who welcomed reunification were alarmed to discover that—contrary to what they had been told—patriotism costs money. In Italy the right-wing populists of the Northern League have made inroads into a hitherto moderate electorate unwilling to cough up funds for the apparently never-ending reconstruction of the South.

If this is the situation in a nation-state, is there any reason to think that an effective regional policy could be funded centrally, by a transfer of resources from prosperous European areas to depressed ones? It may be unrealistic to assume that citizens in Stuttgart or Paris will willingly yield "their" money for regional aid to Greece or Yorkshire—after all, they are not so keen for it to be directed to Saxony or Corsica.

There is no easy solution. This much is, however, certain: the neoliberal model of European integration (that is, Margaret Thatcher's)—get rid of constraints, rip the shackles stopping enterprising capitalists from creating wealth, and so on—is a recipe for European disintegration. The alternative is for the left to adopt a clearly federalist approach that accepts the Maastricht rules of convergence in prices, currency, interest rates, and public spending but insists that such constraints on national decision makers are insufficient. Similar constraints, the left must argue, have to be established for regional and social policies. Rules of convergence should not be limited to prices and budgets but should also apply to regional growth, levels of unemployment, social benefits, discrimination legislation, working conditions, and so on.

This strategy has distinct advantages. In the first place it is not new. It is based on widely accepted principles, many already included in the EC treaties, many rooted in the common heritage of social democratic thought but acceptable also to Christian democrats. Social democrats and Christian democrats together constitute a clear majority of the West European electorate. Furthermore, government resistance to these policies in the eighties and nineties has seldom been justified on ideological grounds (Thatcher's Britain was an exception). Usually it was objected that they would make the country in question less competitive or that taxpayers would not stand for them. In an integrated Europe, social convergence and redistribution may be opposed on tax grounds but not for the sake of competitiveness.

The Question of Democracy

Though the present battle cry on both left and right is decentralization, what the EC really needs is further centralization. The present plan charges nonelected institutions—such as the central bank—which are more or less divorced from popular control and uninhibited by elections, with ensuring stable prices, balanced growth, and free competition. Why not the

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same degree of top-to-bottom commitment to the environment and social rights, to the struggle against unemployment, to equal treatment for women, to help for the handicapped, to safety at work, and so on?

It may be objected that such social integration would leave very little room for party politics. If all governments follow the same guidelines why bother to elect them? This is a serious objection that cannot be dealt with here entirely satisfactorily. It may be sufficient to point out that the construction of any regime entails the establishment of fundamental rules usually embodied in a constitution. Liberal constitutions establish minimum rights that cannot be violated by any government and are therefore removed from normal party competition, but this still leaves room for argument among political parties. The successful introduction of social rights would enhance the democratic process. It guarantees minimum standards that cannot be eliminated by a majority of the electorate and gives the minority (here the underprivileged minority) a stake in the system. Democracy in the full sense (not simply as the will of the majority) is thereby strengthened.

The struggle to entrench social rights will provide a pan-European dimension for the left and thereby set the agenda for left politics in Europe for the foreseeable future. It will not be a utopian fight. It will, actually, renew what used to be called the social democratic consensus, the politics of that golden age in the fifties and sixties when even conservatives favored full employment and did not regard unions as subversive organizations. Of course such consensus politics entails acceptance by all parties—including opponents of socialism—the basic features of a civilized society—yes, a society in which inflation is less than *x* percent, but also one that eliminates the fear of ill health, poverty and want, the indignities of sexual and racial discrimination, and the dangers of environmental damage.

At issue are political and institutional constraints that cannot be disregarded. These must rest on a consensus so wide that revisions will not be undertaken lightly. I see no substantial difference between this and a written constitution.

A Constitution of Europe is unlikely to come about in a traditional way, that is, through a constituent assembly. It will develop in an ad hoc and largely unplanned manner, for there are no real historical precedents. No successful federal state has ever been peacefully established with such varied national communities, divided by language and tradition. The American example, where a civil war was fought on the issue of centralization, is of little help. In the United States there are no serious language divisions (so far), and state borders do not have the significance they have in Europe. Someone may be proud to come from Iowa, but this is not the equivalent of being Danish or Irish.

European socialists should think of the developing EC in the same way as the constituent assembly for a new state. They should try to inscribe in its articles the central coordinates of their beliefs. They should negotiate, make alliances, try to devise the most effective forms of control and enforcement. They should not boycott it or lag behind. They should not be afraid of being innovative, while realizing that the "document" to be produced must gain wide respect and stand the test of time. They must insist that its guiding principles—on a par with price stabilization—should include full employment, social and environmental constraints, nondiscrimination, and decent welfare policies. The aim is not simply to reproduce across Europe what social democracy attempted on the national level. The criticisms of the old welfare state, from across the political spectrum—its centralized and bureaucratic structure, its paternalism, its frequent indifference to individual needs—have been digested by the more innovative sectors of European socialism. They will now have to invent the basis for the national and local administration of a decentralized welfare system. But such decentralization, to succeed, also needs clear guidelines from the center.

European social democratic strategy cannot be limited to entrenching, in one form or other, its basic principles. The tenet of social

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convergence, which is closely related to the older democratic commitment to equality, requires the development of transnational democratic institutions, such as the European Parliament, together with transnational political parties and transnational trade unions. The more European integration advances the greater will be the pressures on national parties to defend specifically national interests. This is inevitable: democratic parties respond to their electorates. In circumstances combining unequal development and power shifts to central institutions, clashes between, say, a ruling German Social Democratic party and a ruling Spanish Socialist party are inescapable. Both would be defending national, that is "regional," interests. If they did not do so they would expose themselves to attacks from their national opponents. It seems, therefore, that it would be in the long-term interests of all concerned that significant powers be transferred to the European Parliament, now a weak institution. This would allow regional parties to maintain their own national outlook, to develop national policies, and to lobby the commission and the Council of Ministers as well as the European Parliament in defense of their electorate's interest. Transnational Europarties would have to balance "regional" variations as present-day national parties do. They would be penalized in one region if they disregarded its interests. They would also, inevitably, clash with nationally based parties. In constructing a novel type of federal state, the standard debates between centralists and federalists are to be expected.

There are social democratic pessimists, who under the guise of realism point out that the prospects for a social democratic pan-European strategy are extremely limited. Socialists, they argue, are in bad shape throughout most of Europe: in opposition in Germany, Sweden, Greece, and Britain; cohabiting in France; in minority governments in Belgium, Denmark, and Norway; in total disarray in Italy; and deprived of an overall majority in Spain.

Unfortunately, all this is true. But no one can win battles they don't fight. The current travail of social democracy seems to suggest that a radical overhaul of policies and outlooks might be profitable. Those who believe that a frankly federalist option is too ambitious should bear in mind that every major step toward further European integration has been the consequence of a grand political design. Plans "which will never work" have set the agenda by dangling goals before the old European cart-horse, making it move forward. From Jean Monnet to Jacques Delors, innovative visions have gone hand in hand with hard-headed realism.

This is not a plea for an inward-looking little Europe. The present crisis of European integration, the growing balkanization of Eastern and Central Europe, the horrendous slaughter in the former Yugoslavia point toward a dismal future. Only multinational companies, which have an interest in pitting nation against nation while escaping all forms of national and supranational control, stand to profit. A more integrated Europe, with a revitalized social democratic left, might become a beacon for social advance in the third world. And it might also suggest to Americans, now free from the cold war, new and more promising models of social organization. □

postmodern icons explained

If you've ever mused over the sociological significance of Madonna's underwear-outerwear dilemma, the deconstruction of a Big Mac, or the *Zeitgeist* of MTV, we have a suggestion to make: *click on the next button.*

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Agnes Heller

NATURAL LAW AND THE PARADOX OF EVIL

Whether moral decisions are evaluated by universal standards or by those of local traditions, moral conflicts are always contextual. Kant's categorical imperative is absolutely universalistic, but its test cases are concrete and particular; one should, for example, return a deposit even where the depositor alone was aware of the arrangement and has since died. In the same way, when I now raise the question of how we can deal with Evil, I do so in a specific context. The moral conflicts that I shall discuss are those that occur in the aftermath of the collapse of totalitarian regimes and of military and other dictatorships. The question is whether the evils perpetrated under murderous political regimes can, should, or will be punished; whether those responsible for murder, kidnapping, and mass incarceration and discrimination, can, will, or should be made to pay for what they have done.

"Paying" here means paying a part rather than the whole price for their acts. Even where the indictment is for common murder, the consensus against capital punishment in "political" cases is very strong, and this is also true in those countries where it has not been abolished. Hannah Arendt's grave meditations on the justification of capital punishment in the Eichmann case are therefore irrelevant in the current context. The alternative to be faced is not that of life or death but of prosecution or inaction.

Whether the perpetrators of such crimes will be prosecuted is not itself a theoretical question. In all probability some will be prosecuted, but a majority of them will not. Thus we are confined to two issues: whether there are legal grounds in the existing constitutions (or laws equivalent to constitutions) for the prosecution of these persons; and whether they should be prosecuted, that is, whether there is a moral obligation to prosecute them.

Each combination of "can" and "should" in relation to these questions represents a moral standpoint. But it is political considerations or their own life histories that make people incline to one or another of the combinations. In what follows, I address some of the merits and demerits of the arguments and evaluate some of our general intuitions on this subject.

The available options can be defined in terms of six possible combinations of a legal and a moral position. The combinations will become clearer as we proceed. (1) There should be no prosecution at all, nor can there be. (2) There should be no prosecution though there is no obstacle to prosecution. (3) The perpetrators should be prosecuted, but cannot be. (4) They should and can be prosecuted. (5) They should be prosecuted for historical justice to be done. Finally, (6) they should pay for their crimes; they should be prosecuted and yet, at the same time, they should not be prosecuted.

In whichever of the four combinations it occurs, the formula that perpetrators of heinous

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crimes" "should be punished" implies that "Justice should be done." The other formula, according to which "they should not be punished," can imply one of three things. It can imply, most radically, that "justice should not be done." It can imply resignation: "There is no justice in this matter anyway." Or it can imply a positive moral standpoint: "It would be unjust to punish them."

Let us consider the first formula, according to which "Justice should be done." In thus subscribing to the injunction that "perpetrators of heinous crimes should be punished," we take responsibility for the punishment of the perpetrators. We do so regardless of whether they can (legally) be punished and of whether they will in fact be punished. We take that responsibility, indeed, even if we go on to say "and yet they cannot be punished." We are responsible for their punishment because, regardless of the ultimate course of events, our injunction is an act equivalent to signing the decree of their punishment. Signing is an act of taking responsibility. Signing and taking responsibility are not acts to be lightly accomplished. Even in one's capacity as an ordinary citizen, one should take one's responsibility no less seriously than would an appointed judge, a member of a jury, or a member of a political body—of an executive or legislative body.

Those who subscribe to the "ought"-sentence ("Perpetrators of heinous crimes ought to be punished") must therefore consider which crimes are "heinous" and which persons are to be identified as their perpetrators.

In identifying the perpetrators of politically motivated or conditioned crimes, we can avail ourselves of more than forty years of discussion of the Nuremberg trials. And the conclusions of this discussion are fairly clear. If, like Honecker,* one gives the order "shoot to kill" in relation to innocent persons who are trying to escape to freedom, one is guilty of murder, whereas the soldier who obeys that order is not. Certainly, the soldier too is responsible for the death of the persons he has shot. One is the author of one's own deeds, good or bad. But one is not necessarily the author of the conditions under which they were committed. In this political context, the accused is guilty of a crime if he or she is not only the author of the crime but also of the circumstances under which that crime was ordered or encouraged.

Who is to decide which heinous crimes must be punished for justice to be done? Under present conditions, only the population of the country where those crimes were committed has, or can claim to have, the authority to decide. There can be no question of international jurisdiction. (German jurisdiction over the crimes committed in former "East Germany" is not a counter-example. Germany is in the same position as postwar France, which regarded Vichy as a part of the French state.) Yet the unreflective intuition of the population is unreliable, for it is divided along generational lines. In regimes of long standing, different generations have different life experiences, and in a long era of enforced silence, crimes unmentioned because unmentionable will tend to be forgotten. The politics of repression are the politics of psychological repression; even the guilty begin to forget their guilt. But the suffering of the mourner is not mitigated by the lapse of time. Enforced silence rather deepens the wound. It is only now that the victims and the families of victims can cry out for justice and revenge.

If one subscribes to the sentence that "perpetrators of heinous crimes should be punished," one also needs a yardstick more reliable than the intuitions of the members of a specific community. Yet it is precisely this intuition that one must rely upon, for no one other than the members of this community is entitled to determine which crimes are so heinous as to call for punishment. This remains true even if, for other reasons, it is decided that legal action cannot be taken.

But since decision here is a matter of judgment, one stratagem for evaluating our intuitions is to replace the type of cases now to be judged with analogous ones from history. These analogous stories should be of a kind with which we have been familiar since primary school.

* Erich Honecker, president of the German Democratic Republic from 1976 to 1990.

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The procedure I recommend here is not a mental experiment but an exercise in becoming aware of our judgmental intuitions. Let us take well-known historical examples of treason, confiscation of wealth, instigation of civil war, political assassination, and mass extermination—whether or not the latter was committed under the forms of legality. Whenever the intuitive consensus is in favor of punishment, the judgment will apply to contemporary cases too. By considering many historical examples, we find out something about our intuitions. For example, in cases of treason, confiscation of wealth, instigation of civil war, or political assassination, our judgment may be divided. A profusion of historical texts exist on which we may base our interpretations and reinterpretations. Sometimes we are uncertain whether the deeds in question were crimes at all. They may also be viewed as virtuous deeds: the prophet Jeremiah committed treason, Judith assassinated Holofernes. And even in those cases where we do intuit a crime, it does not follow that we regard the perpetrator as criminal. Even if we take the execution of Mary Stuart to be a judicial murder, we do not intuitively condemn Elizabeth the First as a murderer. But mass murder, be it an act of collective political proscription (as happened under Sulla) or a collective act of terrorism against the "religious alien" (as happened to the Protestants during the St. Bartholomew's Night Massacre) is not open to a forgiving understanding and interpretation. Such acts are unanimously condemned as evil, at least in the context of the European tradition of the last few centuries, and rightly so, for they are the visible face of evil.

Turning now to the question of historical justice: when we subscribe to the sentiment that justice should be done—regardless of whether it will be done—it is historical justice of which we speak. The "should" refers to the exclusively moral motivation behind the insistence on historical justice. But history includes the future. In enforcing historical justice, we may not consider the pragmatic consequences of our judgment, but we must take into account the moral judgment of future generations. It is for this reason that only genuinely heinous crimes should be punished, for only in such cases can we be certain that all morally competent future generations will subscribe to our verdict and that they will not interpret the act we punish in a different light. It is, of course, an entirely different matter whether future interpreters will consider the perpetrators in the same psychological light as we do, whether they will reinterpret the personhood of the perpetrators. Psychological or phenomenological hermeneutics do not concern the moral judgments of events. Opinions may differ about Hitler's personality, but no morally competent person can ever justify Auschwitz. In short, when we demand that heinous crimes ought to be punished in order for historical justice to be done, we are claiming that all morally competent future generations would consent to the historical justice of our judgment. Whether, in punishing, we punish anything other than the manifestation of evil, is an empirical question, and one that has nothing to do with historical justice. Or at least, if it does, we cannot know this. But it is clear that, for historical crimes, there can be no statute of limitations, precisely because they are historical in the sense that we have just defined.

We conclude: the "heinous crimes" that should be punished for the spirit of historical justice to prevail are those that count as manifestations of evil. But nothing has, as yet, been said about evil. I hope that my theoretical interpretation of evil will illuminate our problem, without shifting the focus of our inquiry. I discern evil in the acts in which others discern it; it is my account of evil that is distinctive.

Evil is not an accumulated or excessive moral badness distinguished from all other categories of badness simply by quantity. Evil is *qualitatively* different from the morally bad. This qualitative difference has become explicit in modern times, although it had already been discovered by particularly discerning moralists such as certain Jewish prophets and Greek philosophers. The knowledge of moral evil emerges through reflection. Where there is no freedom to choose principles of action, there can be badness but not Evil. Moral evil

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requires a fairly sophisticated and consistent system of self-justification. A bad character chooses to commit injustice rather than to suffer it for he makes an exception for himself. He does not, however, invent principles that make the wrong right. A bad character succumbs to base passions such as envy, and behaves in a cowardly fashion. Yet he can feel remorse and may indulge in gestures of disorderly repentance. Our model of Evil, by way of contrast, is Satan, not because he does the wrong things, but because he induces others to do the wrong things by persuading them that evil is right. Plato's Thrasymachos or Callicles are devilish, not because they are bad characters, but because they make a strong case for maxims that confuse our capacity to distinguish between good and evil. As Kant pointed out, evil resides in evil maxims, not in desires or weakness of character.

In modernity, where traditional morals have become attenuated, evil maxims easily gain the upper hand. Totalitarianism in particular is morally founded on evil maxims. These evil maxims form the basis of the discourse initiated in a totalitarian regime, a discourse into which the proverbial "man on the street" is drawn. The citizens begin to speak the language of totalitarianism and as a result come to take for granted acts which a year before they would not have accepted, and the endorsement of which would have been entirely out of character. Only through internalizing this discourse can they come to believe that they have an obligation to denounce their parents to the police or to confess to crimes that they never committed.

I once compared totalitarianism to a disease. Normal people—people neither especially good nor especially bad—are exposed to the disease, take the contagion, and become alienated from their previous selves. If one catches the virus of evil, one becomes evil, even if there had been no "original evil" in one's character. Devils are in fact rare phenomena. Evil characters, if we compare their numbers to those of the wrongdoers who have caught the virus and become evil under its influence, are few and far between.

After the demise of totalitarianism, it is not difficult to distinguish between the "originally evil" and those who became evil through secondary infection. It is the former who originated the evil maxims and who stick to their principles to the last, whose consciences are unruffled and who ascribe the defeat or failure of their principles to the weakness of their followers. The followers, by contrast, can get confused, rewrite their pasts, forget the evil they have committed, and remember only the evils they have suffered; they can slough off their totalitarian self. This is how evil could seem banal to Hannah Arendt. But evil is not banal, even if evil persons become banal after the demise of their power base. The soul is not healed just because the epidemic has passed. The pathetically banal soul does not even feel guilty; he or she feels only the remorse of having bet on the wrong horse. Pangs of conscience or repentance are rare.

There is, moreover, a difference between initial and continuous totalitarianism. In the original or initial state, evil has a high density and visibility; it is demonic. What is merely bad is normally repulsive, but a certain power of attraction emanates from moral evil as such. Evil maxims on the one hand align themselves with the underworld of the human soul, on the other don the garb of high sophistication. Evil in this form is sorcery; it terrifies, demands submission. But in the continuous phase of totalitarianism (we refer here to Communist totalitarianism, since Nazism was defeated in its first phase), the density and visibility of evil diminish, and its epidemic effect dies away. The principal victims of the regime were immune from the virus in any case. Others were morally immune and never succumbed. In this later phase, they are joined by those who were only slightly infected, who now shrug off their infection and may even attack evil on its home territory. Since the demon is always associated with (totalitarian) power, the slackening of the regime in the continuous phase necessarily has a therapeutic effect.

The collapse of totalitarianism brings the epidemic to an end. Evil maxims are, of course, still around, as they always will be while there are maxims to choose and freedom to choose them. But for the time being the

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bearers of evil maxims seem to have been marginalized.

This specificity of evil, that it is not necessarily a permanent resident of the souls that it inhabits, but may enter a soul and subsequently leave it, obviously complicates the issue of retribution. Let us take an example. We know that X was the author of a heinous crime, and we believe that heinous crimes should be punished in order for historic justice to be done. But perhaps the X of today is not the X who committed the crime; perhaps the virus of evil that inhabited his soul has departed leaving only the empty husk of an elderly body and a banal soul. Puccini's Tosca looks at the dead Scarpia and exclaims: "and before this man all Rome trembled!" One could repeat her exclamation with reference to many a person alive today. But those who trembled had, at the time, good reason to do so. Scarpia was an evil, treacherous, political murderer—and there are today Scarpias who walk among us, enjoying both their lives and the benefits of their crimes. Should they be allowed to do so with impunity?

Let me summarize our conclusions. At the outset, I specified six combinations of two elements, one of them moral, the other legal. These were the six major recommendations for dealing with the unique issues of justice raised by the collapse of totalitarian and other criminal dictatorial regimes. I then identified two categories of crime, the historical and the heinous. Finally, I identified heinous crimes as manifestations of evil. In returning to these six combinations, I shall now consider only the case of evil. The granting of general amnesties or the application of the statute of limitations to functionaries and high officials of the former regimes presents no grave moral problem in my view. On the contrary, there are good reasons for behaving in this way. The only exception I make is where such officials or functionaries were perpetrators of evil.

Let us now turn to the arguments *against* punishing the perpetrators of evil. There are several arguments intended to show that not even those guilty of the most heinous crimes should be indicted. I shall consider these point by point. I shall not, however, take into account the view of unreconstructed Stalinists, for in their view, no crimes were committed, and if any were committed, they occurred only as the side effects of an otherwise commendable course of action. Besides, these people have no arguments to offer in the standard language of morals or politics, from which their discourse as much as their actions has excluded them.

In the judgment that "perpetrators of heinous crimes should not be punished," the punishment can refer either to legal punishment alone, that is, to indictment, or to moral punishment.

First proposition: Perpetrators of heinous crimes should not be indicted but only morally censured.

To this I answer: One cannot morally punish a person who is removed from normal moral discourse, who does not experience pangs of conscience, or who has already forgotten his or her crimes. One cannot morally punish a person who despises morals as "petty bourgeois" or as utterly irrelevant.

Modern society is not a homogeneous community. Anyone can avoid moral censure by choosing to live among those who are morally like themselves. In this community, public censure is dismissed, and the prospect of divine punishment mocked as superstition.

Perpetrators of heinous crimes in a totalitarian regime cannot subsequently be morally punished unless they feel remorse. But if they feel anything approaching adequate remorse, they have already been morally punished, and need no second moral punishment.

Thus we see that the recommendation that perpetrators of heinous crimes should only be morally punished is inconsistent, for in either of the two cases we have raised, those who are only morally punished are not punished at all.

Second proposition: those guilty of heinous crimes should not be punished at all.

Under this heading there is a single purely moral argument. There are, however, various admixtures of pragmatic and moral reasons that can be adduced in its favor. The purely moral reason is religious, even if it is on occasion

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found in the mouth of unbelievers. It is the precept to "Love your enemies, forgive those who have wronged you."

But even if I succeed in loving my enemies, should I also love those who have wronged my neighbor beyond repair? Those who have wronged me I can perhaps forgive. There is no need to open secret police files. And if they are opened, and the name of the person who denounced me comes to light, I can perhaps forgive him or her. But one cannot forgive the murder of other people's children, nor should one. One has no moral right to forgive in the name of the dead or of the mourners. For there is a logic in the Christian commandment; you should forgive those who have wronged *you* because the principle is of justice, as distinct from revenge. But others should not forgive on your behalf, nor should you forgive on others' behalf, or there would be no justice. If you forgive in the name of others, you can forgive yourself in their name for the evil you perpetrate, and this is an immoral principle. There is therefore only one purely moral gesture open to us here, the exclamation of the saintly Alyosha Karamazov reacting to an account of barbarity: "Shoot him!" No shooting this time—but moral forgiveness is also excluded.

All the pragmatic arguments in favor of not punishing the guilty in this case boil down to the desire to "turn over a new leaf." There are two versions of the argument.

First version: Too much blood has been shed; let us put an end to blood-letting. Everything that has happened till now should be forgotten. We should not poison our souls with the desire for revenge. Revenge calls forth further revenge, and there is no end to it.

Second version: National reconciliation requires that the past be buried. For this we need everyone's skill and cooperation. It is useless to concern ourselves with the past; we must look ahead, to the future.

In the first formulation, pragmatic and moral considerations are combined. In the second, the moral motivation is negligible.

Let us first consider the "new leaf" argument. The moral considerations in this position are consequentialist. One might equally maintain that a people can only turn to a new and clean page of history *after* having meted out punishment for heinous crimes; this would not be a consequentialist position. Even if one believes that historical justice must be done for any page of history to be clean, it is not in order to cleanse the pages of history that crimes are punished. The motive for the act of retribution is to restore the balance of justice as far as humanly possible.

In the argument under scrutiny, however, retribution is suspended and the act of justice deliberately forgone because of the fear that this act will itself lead to injustices, indeed to a series of injustices. This fear is not unfounded. Every gesture of retribution carries in it the risk of escalation. It is not an insignificant possibility that the morally right could result in the morally wrong.

While acknowledging these consequentialist points, we should note that there are also consequentialist arguments in favor of punishment. Among them are the following: there can be no turning over a new leaf without catharsis, and there can be no catharsis if we simply sweep crimes under the carpet. The idyllic new page of history will not, after all, be clean. The decision not to prosecute the offenders does not cause hatred, resentment, and personal grievances to be forgotten: they simply resurface at the next suitable occasion.

Those who oppose punishment on moral grounds often do so on the basis of a deterrent theory of punishment. Punishment is no longer necessary, it is argued, because the perpetrators of heinous crimes are no longer in a position to commit such crimes. They cannot repeat their crimes. And no one else can either. In contemporary Argentina, no one can any longer cause people to "disappear" by kidnap, torture, and murder, as happened in the past. In the newly unified Germany, no one can give the order that those who cross the border should be shot. Thus it no longer serves any deterrent function to punish those who committed heinous crimes.

Let us assume, for the sake of simplicity, what I do not acknowledge in fact: that the main principle of punishment is deterrence. Imagine the situation where veteran mass

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murderers continue to live in the same conditions as everyone else, or, for that matter, in better ones. What kind of morality would this example suggest to present and future politicians? It would convey a simple message: whatever they do, however criminal their acts, they will get away with them, provided only that they rule for a sufficiently long time, and that they take pains to hide their crimes under the forms of legality. People will be so anxious to turn over a new leaf that the crimes of their rulers will go unpunished in the future as they did in the past; this is what the present and future politicians will conclude.

It is possible of course that no political crimes could today be of the same magnitude as those of the past. But the principle remains: there are crimes on a smaller scale that can still make people miserable, and one never knows what opportunities for evil will arise in the future. If one accepts the principle of deterrence, the negative formulation that "we need not punish where there is no reason to deter" must be balanced by the positive formulation that "if we wish to deter, we must punish."

The policy adopted in Spain in the aftermath of the Franco regime may serve as a model for the successful combination of moral and pragmatic considerations. A clean page in the history of Spain was opened and the consequences were morally and pragmatically benign. But it should also be said that the context was unique. The Spanish solution can serve as an example only in countries where decisions take place in a somewhat similar context. The purely moral injunction to "love your enemies, forgive those who have wronged you" takes on an aura of truth in the context of the Spanish Civil War, in which both sides committed heinous crimes. Symbolically and in very truth, men and women had to forgive the sins of those who wronged themselves, their families, or friends. In the ex-communist states, and in post-totalitarian states, the situation is quite other, and the example of Spain not therefore applicable.

Let me turn briefly to a second version of the "new leaf of history" argument. In this version, it is argued that the past should be forgotten in order that the future can begin. This is a "technological" argument; it treats historical periods as if they were machines. The obsolete appliances have to be thrown away and replaced by new ones. However commendable in the field of technology, this attitude is wholly out of place in relation to a nation's history, which is no less about remembering and hanging on to the past than it is about the projection of the future. A nagging awareness of the past creates the third dimension of history, the dimension of meaning that gives life to any projection of the future, however radical the break with the past. A future that is fabricated *ex nihilo* rests on unsound foundations; there is nothing to underpin it. There can, in short, be no national reconciliation if one forgets the very events that set the nation at odds.

"Perpetrators of heinous crimes should be punished, for no counter-argument has so far convinced us of the contrary." Anyone subscribing to this verdict thereby signs the decree of punishment, whether or not the punishment will in fact be carried out. To sign it is to be led by the belief that it is wrong to let heinous crimes go unpunished, that justice should be done. The blood of the victims cries out to heaven for punishment to be administered in the next world, but no less to ourselves and to posterity for punishment in this world.

Three persons say in unison that the perpetrators should be punished. The first adds: alas, they cannot be. The second insists: since they should be punished, they can be punished. The third raises her hands in perplexity: they should be punished, and yet, at the same time, they should not. These are the last of the three combinations that we introduced, and I shall analyze them one by one.

The first position is this: justice requires that we prosecute the perpetrators of heinous crimes, but the legal system does not permit it. Prosecution would, to take an example, require retroactive legislation. Compromises are, alas, necessary in political life, and in this case, justice cannot be done.

The second position denies the relevance of

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this "cannot." Whatever we should do, we must be able to do. No legal system, not even a brand-new one with its origins in democracy, can be allowed to stand in the way of justice. If there is a consensus that heinous crimes have been committed, the perpetrators have to answer for them. There is no place for legalism here, the argument runs, first and foremost because the brand-new laws should not run counter to our moral intuitions. As Judith Shklar has rightly said: there is a continuum between moral and legal considerations.[1]

The argument that "we should, but we cannot" is based on principles of legal positivism on two counts. First, it disallows the suspension of our own laws—laws such as the statute of limitations—in certain extraordinary cases, such as the punishment of heinous crimes; and second, it treats the pseudo-laws of totalitarian regimes as if they were real ones. But not everything written on a piece of paper and passed as law by a bunch of murderers, their accomplices, and the agents of their institutions, bullied into obedience, qualifies as law. Thousands of trainloads of kulaks were "lawfully" driven to the taiga and left to starve to death with their children. The legitimate prime minister of Hungary was tried and executed according to laws extant. Where laws were produced according to whim, political convenience, and the dictates of political revenge, there were no laws. We conclude that the position that "they should be punished, but cannot be" is a lopsided one; its two components are not equally stable. Morality is on the side of those insisting on punishment, but the legal aspects of the argument are treated as little more than a pragmatic consideration, at very best a token on the altar of national, historical reconciliation. And where morality collides with pragmatic considerations, the old Kantian recipe is still valid; the moral "ought" should have priority. What one ought to do, one can do. That is, despite all pragmatic arguments to the contrary, the morally approved course of action should go ahead. Let us then have a new round of Nuremberg Trials. The Nuremberg Trials are our example, and the example is there to be imitated.

We turn now to the last position. It states that heinous crimes should be punished—and simultaneously insists that its perpetrators should not be punished. This position sounds absurd and paradoxical, but it is neither. It locates a moral conflict. All moral conflicts, like moral choices, are contextual. The context for this position is the same as that for the other two positions. It arises in states where the constitution does not provide for the prosecution of those guilty of heinous crimes.

The moral argument for this position can be summed up as follows:

Positions one and two both state that a moral ought ("Justice should be done") is confronted with a mainly legal and pragmatic consideration that brings into focus certain secondary moral issues. The two positions diverge on one count. For the first position ("Justice should and cannot be done"), the obstacles to justice could not be obviated. For the second ("Justice should and therefore could be done") the obstacles could be removed. But the second position is essentially wrongheaded, for the suspension of the law for particular cases is not just legally but morally wrong. The maximum that the law should be suspended in particular cases is an evil maxim. Philosophers who locate evil in evil maxims have always counted arguments in favor of its suspension as evil. It was because he could not condone such arguments that Socrates suffered an unjust death rather than attempt to escape the laws of his country, and that Kant made such a strong case not against tyrannicide but against the trial of Louis XVI. And it is also wrong to believe that the maxim cannot be evil simply because no evil consequences have flowed from it in certain cases. It is commonplace that good results may flow from bad intentions or designs, but no commonplace makes good of bad or bad of good.

The maxim that perpetrators of heinous crimes should be punished is transcontextual. Evil should be punished everywhere, under all circumstances, and no less, therefore, in the context we here consider. To this maxim there is no exception. Self-punishment, in the form of repentance or penitence, does not constitute an exception. But if a person can be punished only by suspension of the law, he should not be

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punished, because the maxim that recommends the suspension of the law is itself evil. This does not, of course, affect the principle that evil should be punished. Evil should not go unpunished, but neither should one act upon evil maxims, whatever good consequences may follow. Thus the conclusion that perpetrators of heinous crimes should and at the same time should not be punished. No paradox here, just a moral conflict in context.

If we confront the advocates of the third position with the Nuremberg Trials, they will answer that the context in which they must reach a verdict is entirely different. This is not because the Nazi crimes were of a different degree of heinousness; evil is evil, evil is always infinite, and we can say with Nicolaus of Cusa that in an infinite triangle all sides would always be equal, for all of them would be infinite.[2] But a particularity of the Nazi crimes that were tried in Nuremberg is that they were committed against many different peoples, so that no existing law could possibly have applied to them. For evil to be punished, a recourse to the fictitious laws of nature was necessary, and this meets with our own intuitive—and retrospective—approval. If there is a procedure based on fictitious natural law, it is the consensus of moral intuition that must guide us in establishing the rightness of the principle. And the arguments we have set out show that there is no consensus at all as to whether people who have committed heinous crimes should now be punished. Where intuition is so disparate in its conclusions, we have no moral justification for recourse to the fictitious laws of nature that must by definition reflect moral intuition.

In our discussion of evil, we concluded that those guilty of heinous crimes should be punished, for justice must be done. The discussion was conducted in the abstract, regardless of context. Then we returned to the context, that is, to the situations in which decisions are now being taken. After looking briefly at the arguments against prosecution, we listened to three groups of people who subscribed to the verdict that the perpetrators of such crimes should be punished. Here we took a context narrower than before; we looked at the hardest cases. We assumed a democratically based legal system that makes no provision for the indictment of the perpetrators, and we imagined that the guilty showed no sign of serious moral repentance.

All three positions remain thoroughly problematic. If the first is accepted, heinous crimes remain unpunished. Petty thieves will go to prison in countries where mass murderers will enjoy a peaceful old age.

If the second position is accepted, a procedure that feeds on moral legitimacy will be pushed forward in the absence of any such legitimacy. If there should be a second edition of the Nuremberg Trials without the support of consensual moral intuition, it will cast a retrospective shadow on the Nuremberg Trials themselves. They can remain an exemplary act of justice only on condition they are not copied. The Nuremberg Trials stand as the embodiment of the regulative idea, the ought-sentence according to which those guilty of heinous crimes ought to be punished. Their context remains forever unique.

Still, the first two positions have a certain value as recommendations. They do at least tell us what to do. The third position, by contrast, is not a recommendation at all; it merely formulates a moral conflict. Where a moral choice is confronted with a pragmatic or consequentialist consideration, the categorical imperative or one of its variants can cut the Gordian knot. But where two moral choices confront one another, no categorical imperative is available. One chooses one principle, and thereby infringes on the other; or if one chooses neither, one infringes on both. Yet it is impossible to choose both at once—this is the definition of a moral conflict.

One *might* say here, with Derrida,[3] that justice is always incalculable; that it requires that one calculate the incalculable; that it addresses itself to singularity; that, in deciding, we should give ourselves up to the impossible decision; that we should, while taking account of rules and laws, nevertheless decide. Yet everything that can hamper men and women in the process of decision is here present in the

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extreme, for there are no laws and no rules, not even the prospect of guidance, to orient those who decide. No new law will be founded, or ancient law revived, by their decision. All that will transpire is the impossibility of founding such laws. On the one hand, the argument runs, those who decide will incur guilt whatever course they fasten on. And on the other, choose we must, at least in the inner fastness of our souls.

But the question whether those guilty of heinous crimes should be punished is, in this way, evacuated of its political and social content, and no longer calls for a straightforward answer even when it is asked in a specific context. The question is simply thrown back to the person who asks it: *you* choose, you sign, it is *your* responsibility, only be aware that you choose between two evils. It emerges that the double formula of "Those guilty of heinous crimes should be punished and at the same time should not be punished," that this gesture of throwing the ball back into the court, of informing the decision makers that moral conflict cannot be solved but only cut off by the leap of choice, is a confession of defeat. It is to concede our impotence in the confrontation with evil.

Something must have gone wrong at the outset, for the conclusion is not merely disquieting but downright false. We know from experience that evil can in fact be resisted, that many men and women have resisted evil in dark times. And evil must indeed be resisted while it is in power. But in our context, where the dilemma of punishing evil arises, evil has fallen from power. Evil, as we have seen, is intimately related to power, it thrives upon the confidence that its power is irresistible, whether this power is political, social, or psychological. There is no evil without power. Resistance to evil, on the other hand, is found in persons combining two characteristics: good maxims and excellent character. Good maxims immunize them to the attraction of evil; they do not become infected during the epidemic. They know where right ends and wrong begins. Their character makes them stand up to evil and oppose it, and they would rather suffer than commit injustice. In resisting evil, they display courage and decency. Contrast this with the qualities needed to subscribe to the verdict that those guilty of heinous crimes should be punished. No courage and decency are needed here. Quite different moral characters can subscribe to the judgment, not least those cowards who hid in the dark while evil was still in power. We conclude, then, that what I called our impotence in facing evil is not the manifestation of general human fragility, but a predicament that follows from the very character of evil.

Let me recapitulate the core of our predicament. There are evil persons in the world; they originate evil maxims; they are demonic. But the radius of their influence is generally insignificant. Then, for many contingent reasons, social, political, and other, the influence of evil maxims suddenly spreads, mobilizing the worst psychological drives and recruiting to its cause the subtlest intellectual apparatus. The epidemic flourishes, evil gains the upper hand and begins to operate on a grand scale, leaving behind it human hecatombs, misery, and devastation. And then, if there is still a "then," the epidemic recedes, and the evil maxims are replaced by disappointment or cynicism. If a totalitarian regime lasts long enough, the worst of the malefactors are already in their graves, beyond the reach of human retribution.

The obstacles to punishment that we have discussed so far have been pragmatic and legalistic. But there is another possible obstacle to punishment. The perpetrators cannot be punished, because the main culprits, the initiators of all the evils, are now beyond the reach of human retribution. And it is those who created the initial conditions in which heinous crimes were committed who are the true perpetrators. A handful of them are alive, but most of them are dead. Can justice still be done?

A repeat of the Nuremberg Trials, we have argued, is morally impossible, given the absence of moral consensus about its desirability. The so-called laws of nature are only the projections of our general moral intuition. In the absence of this consensual intuition, the

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laws of nature are a mere anachronism. But *why* is there no moral consensus about the desirability of new Nuremberg Trials?

The Nazis were in power for little more than ten years, ten years characterized by the escalation of evil. It was possible to bring to justice all the perpetrators of Nazi crimes, with the exception of Hitler, Himmler, and Goebbels, who escaped through suicide. Soviet totalitarianism, in contrast, lasted between forty and seventy-five years. After the years of escalation of evil, there was a cyclic diminution of its energy. The regime was the same, heinous crimes were still committed, and the suffering of the victims was no less than it had been at the height of the terror. But the diminishing energy of evil led to a kind of banalization. New generations grew up, and many terrible deeds were simply forgotten. To reawaken memories is not, for the most part, welcome. The moral issue here is not whether this oblivion is a good or a bad thing. It is simply that under these conditions, even if there were a consensus about which crimes were so heinous as to require punishment, no moral consensus about new Nuremberg Trials could possibly emerge.

If evil maxims can establish a power base that lasts long enough, perpetrators of evil will, in all probability, never be punished. Those who commit the most execrable crimes will get away with it. This is why we are impotent against evil. Good can resist evil while evil lasts, but becomes impotent against it after evil's demise.

Evil is active while it holds power, but once its power is gone, evil is just an empty shell, the physical body of a person who was once evil. Can evil be punished while it lasts, while it is evil incarnate? The answer is no: evil cannot be punished, but is self-destructive. It turns against itself. Self-destruction is the inevitable logic of evil, however long it is in power, however long it lasts.

The perpetrators of heinous crimes should be punished because justice should be done. The times were out of joint, and we must set them straight. But it is of secondary importance whether the surviving perpetrators of crimes *are* actually punished. The Claudius with whom we have to deal has already lost both crown and queen. But there are no clean new pages in the book of history, and there is no cleansing to be attained at the price of forgetting. On the contrary, like Horatio "speaking to th'yet unknowing world," we should tell and retell the story of those "carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts," those "accidental judgments, casual slaughters" and "deaths put on by cunning and forced cause" perpetrated by the hand of evil, in the twentieth century, in our own house, and on such a scale as not only Horatio but Hamlet himself had never dreamt of in his philosophy. □

Notes

[1] Judith Shklar, *Legalism: Law, Morals and Political Trials* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964).

[2] Nicolaus of Cusa, *On Learned Ignorance* (Minneapolis: the Arthur J. Banning Press, 1981).

[3] Jacques Derrida, "Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice," *Cardozo Law Review*, 11:919, 1990.

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Carlo Rosselli

THE LIBERAL SOCIALISM OF CARLO ROSSELLI

Introduction by Nadia Urbinati

Carlo Rosselli has been known for some time in the English-speaking world as a hero of the Italian resistance to fascism—a larger-than-life figure in memoirs and histories of the 1920s and 1930s. But his writings have never until now been translated. We present here excerpts from Nadia Urbinati's introduction to her edition of Rosselli's Liberal Socialism *and then a central section of that extraordinary book.* —EDS.

Carlo Rosselli was a socialist before becoming a liberal socialist. He was a sui generis socialist, because from the beginning socialism for him was a moral ideal totally free of Marxist orthodoxy. Rosselli's first explicit adherence to socialist ideas goes back to 1921, when he attended the Congress of the Italian Socialist party in Livorno (where the communist wing led by Antonio Gramsci and Amedeo Bordiga seceded). In a postcard to his mother he wrote that he "felt a new being vibrating within [him]self." From that point on, Rosselli devoted his intellectual and political efforts to providing the socialist movement with a new perspective, one that would replace the deterministic vision of Marxism, largely adopted by the continental socialist leaders at the end of the nineteenth century. His efforts bore fruit during the opposition to fascism, but their roots have to be sought elsewhere, in his family, in the cultural life of Florence in the 1910s and 1920s, and in the experience of the First World War.

Carlo Rosselli was born in Rome on November 16, 1899, to a Jewish family with strong Mazzinian and liberal traditions. Some members of his father's family, the Rosselli-Nathans, had been exiled to London, where they became close collaborators of Giuseppe Mazzini, who died in Pisa in 1872, in the house of Rosselli's great-uncle Pellegrino Rosselli. Carlo's mother, Amelia Pincherle, brought into the family the liberal tradition of the Risorgimento. Her influence on her three male children was profound, particularly after she left her husband and moved from Rome to Florence in 1903.

Amelia Rosselli was a talented and well-known playwright, and an habituée of the nationalistic circles and avant-garde literary clubs that flourished in Florence during the first years of the century. Her patriotism was affected by the liberation of the ghettos, which was promoted by the government of Rome. Like other Jews of her generation, Amelia experienced the first period of assimilation as a moment of great liberation, and for this reason she could not be anything but a strong

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supporter of the Italian constitutional monarchy. "We are Jewish," Amelia wrote to Carlo, "but *first of all* Italian."

According to Amelia Rosselli, the Hebrew religion had to remain an inner and private experience; it must be kept "within the heart" and have a uniquely moral character: "This was the only religious education I gave my children." Religion should have the function of keeping alive the faith in human dignity and solidarity. But was it not Christianity that instilled this formidable faith? So why, Carlo asked his mother, should we still be Jewish when Hebraism preaches "a differentiation among human beings"? Why not instead, answered his mother, combine the best of both religions—the universalism of Catholicism and the inwardness of Judaism? Echoes of this religious travail may still be heard in this book, particularly in Rosselli's effort to present the liberal socialist ideal, its longing for freedom and justice, as part of Western historical and cultural traditions.

From his mother Carlo also inherited a strong attachment to liberal ideals. Amelia had deeply absorbed Ibsen's heroic morality of modern times: a defiance of all forms of social convention, and every moralistic restriction on individual expression, a belief in women's liberation and in the centrality of individual consciousness, and, finally, a deep devotion to voluntarism and idealism. Within the individual will—Rosselli learned in his youth—is the origin of both evil and good.

Rosselli went to war in 1917, after his oldest brother had already been killed. The war was for him—as for many Italians of his generation—a decisive and terrible experience that converted hope into disillusion, passion into skepticism. The suffering and fear in the trenches had the power to equalize soldiers, who came from social classes that had never had the chance to interact before. Many intellectuals discovered the existence of another nation, extremely poor and illiterate, a nation of which only the socialists had spoken. "Departing with an abstract ideal . . . they have been placed in a position of understanding many things that otherwise, given the isolation of their class and profession, would certainly have eluded them," wrote Rosselli.

The war did not turn Rosselli into a socialist. It left him in a deep spiritual crisis, tired of the "old swollen world" and casting about for an ideal, shocked by so much violence and blood. Given his faith in will and action, his Mazzinian sense of duty, his intoxication with the masses, he could have become anything: fascist or socialist, nationalist or democrat. He discovered he had only one certainty: the young generation could no longer accept the way of life, politics, and ideals of the period before the war—neither the old liberalism with its conservative paternalism nor the old socialism with its messianic expectation for a new humanity.

After his graduation, Rosselli taught economics at the University of Turin, then at the Bocconi University of Milan (where he became acquainted with Piero Sraffa, who influenced his economic thought), and finally in Genoa. During these years (1924 to 1926) he wrote several important essays against free-market ideology, which he distinguished from liberalism; the latter he interpreted as an "ethical conception" able to have an emancipatory effect on the working class. Rosselli's most significant experiences in those cities came from outside the university. His stay in Turin (then the major Italian industrial city) between 1922 and 1923, years of great social and political tension, was particularly important. Here a long and hard season of strikes was ending (1919–1921). Gramsci had already elaborated his version of workshop democracy and founded *L'Ordine Nuovo*, one of the most original political journals of the time. It was not Gramsci, however, who interested Rosselli the most, but the intellectuals gathered around Piero Gobetti and his journal *La rivoluzione liberale (Liberal revolution)*, an unorthodox group that, contrary to the traditional interpretation of liberalism, considered the working class, then aiming to become an autonomous political actor, as the modern expression of the "liberal spirit."

The deep connection that Rosselli perceived between liberty and justice was certainly the

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result of his reflections on fascism. From this his critique of Marxist socialism originated as well. As Arturo Labriola, one of the protagonists of Italian revisionism, wrote in 1923, Marxism underestimated the importance of human rights and human liberty, which is either individual liberty or merely a "new mockery that follows the many others suffered by the individual throughout history." What made Italian socialism original—and this may also be true for the Communist party after World War II—was the fact that its renaissance in the twentieth century was deeply marked by reflection on the fascist phenomenon and the understanding that the defeat of liberal democracy was also a defeat for socialism. Thus, as Rosselli stressed, socialism needs political and civil liberties; in turn, these liberties need a politics of social justice to remain alive.

From 1925 on Rosselli's life was an impressive odyssey of clandestine initiatives. Immediately after the Fascists had destroyed the Circolo di Cultura, the cultural association to which Rosselli belonged, he founded two journals, *Non mollare (Don't Give Up)* and *Il Quarto Stato (The Fourth Estate)*, the latter with Pietro Nenni, the future leader of the Italian Socialist party. With other friends (among them Sandro Pertini, who in the late 1970s became president of the Italian republic, and Ferruccio Parri, the prime minister of the first government after the Second World War) he led a clandestine organization with the purpose of helping the most prominent anti-Fascist leaders to escape from Italy.

In 1927 (the year after Gramsci was jailed), having made possible the emigration of Filippo Turati, the father of Italian socialism, Rosselli and his comrades were captured and confined first to Ustica, then Lipari, two small Mediterranean islands. On Lipari, between 1928 and 1929, he wrote *Socialismo liberale*. "Even a superficial reading of *Socialismo liberale*," wrote Aldo Garosci, "is enough to prove Rosselli's fate will not be to finish his days in Lipari. This is a book that leads naturally to action." As Rosselli himself said of his days in Lipari, "Here I have many friends. Life is not too bad. I read, study and, in secret, write. But I am sick, already sick of the island, sick to death of this chicken-coop existence, of this false appearance of liberty. . . . No, no, I wasn't born to live in a chicken coop."

Rosselli and his friends escaped in the summer of 1929. The flight was memorable, worthy of the best tradition of romantic adventure. It created a sensation all over Europe, and thanks to Francesco F. Nitti's book *Escape*, in the United States as well.

In Paris, in October 1929, Rosselli and his friends founded Giustizia e Libertà, which he described as "among all the Italian anti-Fascist movements . . . the only one that was born and grew up after the advent of fascism." The first anti-Fascists affiliated with Giustizia e Libertà belonged to the early political emigration (between 1922 and 1927), and apart from the "heretical socialist" Rosselli, most were liberals and republicans (the latter, given their Mazzinian background, had a propensity for conspiratorial action). To this group—whose first act was to organize the flight from Lipari—Rosselli brought "his impetuous nature," and above all his patrimony, without which the organization could not have survived.

Like Rosselli's liberal socialism, Giustizia e Libertà was based on voluntarism (the "moral factor"), freedom, and pluralism. Giustizia e Libertà intended to be a national (in the sense of nonpartisan) organization, the inspiration for a second Risorgimento, this time able to unify and involve all social classes in the struggle for liberty and justice. Its propaganda materials were written for, and distributed to, "soldiers, priests, students, workers," "white-collar employees," small industrialists, and farmers.

"People came to the movement," wrote Rosselli in 1937, "from all parties: there were socialists, Communists, democrats, republicans, Sardinian autonomists, pupils of Gobetti, Gramsci, and Salvemini, intellectuals without party. The very young came to the rebellion on their own path, passing through a solitude of tyranny." Among them I mention Carlo Levi, Luigi Salvatorelli, Vittorio Foa, Norberto Bobbio, the literary critic Leone Ginsburg, the musical critic Massimo Mila, the writer Cesare Pavese (all of them active in Turin), Nicola

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Chiaromonte, the jurist Silvio Trentin, and Gaetano Salvemini (already in exile).

Their principles were parliamentary democracy, large regional autonomies (almost a federal system), and workshop democracy (councils and unions). Regarding the economic and social sector, their aim was to combine different solutions, like the nationalization of the most vital services, cooperation, and free enterprise: civil society was conceived as a sort of federation of federations. The group's program, Rosselli wrote, "was based on the concepts of autonomy and councils inherited by the *Ordine Nuovo* and by *La rivoluzione liberale*," that is, by Gramsci and Gobetti. The program was strongly criticized by the anti-Fascist parties, especially because it sounded too moderate, too timid, in envisaging the "new Italy." The socialists complained that Giustizia e Libertà did not recognize the working class as the only, or the major, political and social protagonist, the communists that it conceived only of a democratic revolution. To Trotsky, whom Rosselli met in 1934, he tried in vain to explain that "our revolutionary liberalism has nothing to do with bourgeois liberalism, that the struggle against a Fascist dictatorship compels even the Communists to put the passwords liberty and democracy first."

In 1932 the movement started to publish its own journal, *Quaderni di "Giustizia e Libertà" (Papers of "Justice and Freedom")*, which expressed the inner pluralism of the movement. It was Rosselli, however, who put his stamp on the journal with his polemic against the dogmatism and sectarianism that were widespread among the anti-Fascists and his desire to escape the old ideological labels: "Instead of aiming at a 'renaissance' [of the political values of pre-Fascist Italy], Giustizia e Libertà must venture to give life within itself to the movements of tomorrow." He refused to identify himself and the movement with any party: after the collapse of fascism the new reality would bring forth new problems and new parties. To subordinate the future to any existing political groups—all of them an expression of a reality deeply marked by fascism—would be a mistake. This conclusion, so intelligent and yet so difficult for the anti-Fascist parties to grasp, was inspired by his deep awareness of the peculiar condition of exiles, "almost always very bad judges" both of the politics of the country in which they live and those of their own.

Giustizia e Libertà's project to create a clandestine insurrectional movement in Italy failed after a few years. At the beginning of 1930 several activists were captured in various Italian cities. In May 1935 the whole Turinese group (the most active one) was arrested. Giustizia e Libertà, however, survived the persecutions, and even after the war, when the movement no longer existed, its ideals persisted in various intellectuals who, in spite of different experiences and allegiances, never ceased searching for a cooperative modus vivendi between liberalism and socialism. This was the case with the historians Franco Venturi, Enzo Tagliacozzo, and Max Salvadori, the writer Nicola Chiaromonte, the union leader Vittorio Foa, and the legal and political theorist Norberto Bobbio. But Giustizia e Libertà also survived abroad. It had branches in France, Germany, the United States, and England.

In 1936 Rosselli left Paris to fight in Spain. Along with the Spanish anarchists, Giustizia e Libertà had formed the Catalonian battalion. This would be the last of Rosselli's enterprises. Back in France, in Bagnoles de l'Orne—where he went with his family to recover from phlebitis before returning to Spain—he and his brother Nello (who never was active in the anti-Fascist movement) were assassinated by Mussolini's hired killers, in collaboration with the Pétainistes. It was June 9, 1937, several weeks after Gramsci's death in prison. Carlo Rosselli was thirty-seven years old.

NADIA URBINATI

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Carlo Rosselli

LIBERAL SOCIALISM

The phrase "liberal socialism" has a strange sound to many who are accustomed to current political terminology. The word "liberalism" unfortunately has been used to smuggle so many different kinds of merchandise and has been so much the preserve of the bourgeoisie in the past, that today a socialist has difficulty bringing himself to use it. But I do not wish to propose a new party terminology here. I wish only to bring the socialist movement back to its first principles, to its historical and psychological origins, and to demonstrate that socialism, in the last analysis, is a philosophy of liberty.

In any case, the time when bourgeois politics and liberal, free-market politics were one and the same has passed. All over the world the bourgeoisies no longer defend free markets and are no longer necessarily liberal. The more the proletarian movement takes hold and an active sense of liberty gains strength among the masses, the more the bourgeoisie, in its most backward sectors, tries to escape from the discipline and pattern of liberty. Even the new directions that modern production—rationalized, mechanized, technocratic—is taking as it sacrifices the human personality of the worker are forcing socialists to assume a liberal function in the quite traditional sense of the term. The day will come when this word, this attribute, will be claimed with proud self-awareness by the socialist: that will be the day of his maturity, the day when he wins emancipation, at least in the domain of the spiritual.

Liberalism in its most straightforward sense can be defined as the political theory that takes the inner freedom of the human spirit as a given and adopts liberty as the ultimate goal, but also the ultimate means, the ultimate rule, of shared human life. The goal is to arrive at a condition of social life in which each individual is certain of being able to develop his own personality fully. Liberty is also the means in the sense that the final stage cannot be bestowed or imposed; it has to be earned through hard personal struggle, as the generations succeed one another in time. Liberalism conceives of liberty not as a fact of nature, but as becoming, as development. One is not born free; one becomes free. And one stays free by retaining an active and vigilant sense of one's autonomy, by constantly exercising one's freedoms.

Faith in liberty is at the same time a declaration of faith in man, in his unlimited perfectibility, in his capacity for self-determination, in his innate sense of justice. A true liberal is anything but a skeptic; he is a believer, even though he opposes all dogmatic pronouncements, and an optimist, even though his conception of life is virile and dramatic.

In the abstract, this is how matters stand. In historical terms, the question becomes more complicated because liberalism has both a conceptual history and a practical one, and in the course of its unfolding it has produced an extraordinary harvest of practical experience and successive degrees of conceptualization. It was born of modern critical thought and made its first mark on history at the time of the Reformation. The subsequent ferocity of the wars of religion, in which men slaughtered one another in the name of opposing faiths and opposing dogmas, was the matrix of the notion of liberty of religious conscience, which blossomed as a flower does amid ruins. Catholics and Protestants, incapable of exterminating each other, agreed to a truce and

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acknowledged the right of all individuals to profess the cult that each preferred. Liberty as a principle then spread to the sphere of cultural life in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries through the influence of scientific progress and as a result of the economic and intellectual ascendancy of the bourgeoisie. The latter reached a high point with the publication of the *Encyclopédie* and finally achieved its political triumph with the revolution of 1789 and the accompanying Declaration of the Rights of Man. In our age the liberal idea has revealed its tendency to structure every aspect and every part of social life, especially the economic sphere. The result is that liberty, from being a notionally universal prerogative that in fact corresponded to the interests of a minority, is truly becoming the patrimony of all.

Socialism is nothing more than the logical development, taken to its extreme consequences, of the principle of liberty. Socialism, when understood in its fundamental sense and judged by its results—as the concrete movement for the emancipation of the proletariat—is liberalism in action; it means that liberty comes into the life of poor people. Socialism says: the abstract recognition of liberty of conscience and political freedoms for all, though it may represent an essential moment in the development of political theory, is a thing of very limited value when the majority of men, forced to live as a result of circumstances of birth and environment in moral and material poverty, are left without the possibility of appreciating its significance and taking any actual advantage of it. Liberty without the accompaniment and support of a minimum of economic autonomy, without emancipation from the grip of pressing material necessity, does not exist for the individual; it is a mere phantasm. In these circumstances the individual is enslaved by poverty, humiliated by his own subjection; and life presents only one aspect to him, gives him only one illusion to pursue: material satisfaction. Free in law, he is in fact a slave. And the sense of servitude is sharpened by bitterness and irony the moment the virtual slave becomes aware of his legal liberty and of the obstacles that society places in the way of his actually gaining it. Now the socialist contends that when socialism was born, modern society was full of individuals in this situation; and individuals in this situation still compose a large segment of the working class in the capitalist world today, deprived as they are of any control over the tools with which they work, of any share in the process of decision making that guides production, of any sense of dignity and responsibility in the workplace—dignity and responsibility, the first steps on the ladder leading from slavery to liberty.

In the name of liberty, and for the purpose of ensuring its effective possession by all men and not just a privileged minority, socialists postulate the end of bourgeois privilege and the effective extension of the liberties of the bourgeoisie to all. In the name of liberty they ask for a more equal distribution of wealth and the automatic guarantee for every person of a life worth living. In the name of liberty they speak of socialization, the abolition, that is, of private ownership of the means of production and exchange. They want social life to be guided not by the egoistic criterion of personal utility but by the social criterion, the criterion of the collective good. If the choice is between an intermediate grade of liberty that applies to the whole collectivity and an unbounded liberty furnished to a few at the expense of the many, an intermediate liberty is better, a hundred times better. Ethics, economics, and right all lead to this conclusion.

The socialist movement is, in consequence, the objective heir of liberalism: it carries this dynamic idea of liberty forward through the vicissitudes of history toward its actualization. Liberalism and socialism, rather than opposing one another in the manner depicted in outdated polemics, are connected by an inner bond. Liberalism is the ideal force of inspiration, and socialism is the practical force of realization.

The bourgeoisie was, at one time, the standard-bearer of this idea of liberty; the liberal function was in its hands when it broke open the rigid, frozen order of the feudal world and sowed the seeds of fecund life. In its battle against the dogmatism of the church and monarchical absolutism, against the privileges

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of the nobility and clergy, against the dead realm of static, forced production, the bourgeoisie embodied, over a long sequence of centuries, the progressive impetus of the whole society. That is no longer true. The bourgeoisie has won; it has captured the dominating heights, but as it triumphs, its revolutionary function and its progressive ferment fade away. It is no longer driven by a restless urge for liberty and progress to surpass the gains it has already made; it is no longer abetted by a universal ideal that transcends its class interests, as in 1789. Bourgeois liberalism, so called, has forged a closed and rigid system propped up by the array of economic, juridical, and social principles that are synthesized in the expression "capitalist bourgeois state." It still harks back to the old principles of the French Revolution, but those principles have the appearance of being crystallized, embalmed, bereft of their inner significance; they now seem to be in contradiction to the spirit that inspired those who proclaimed these very principles in a rush of generous enthusiasm.

Bourgeois liberalism attempts to halt the historical process at its present stage, to perpetuate its own commanding position, to transform into a privilege what was once a right deriving from its undeniable pioneering work; it obstructs the entry of militant new social forces onto the stage of history. With its dogmatic attachment to the principles of economic libertarianism (private property, rights of inheritance, full freedom of initiative in every field, with the state as the organ responsible for internal policing and external defense), it has managed to shackle the dynamic spirit of liberalism to the transitory pattern of a particular social system. The truth is that liberalism is by definition historicist and relativistic; it sees history as a perpetual flux, an eternal becoming and overcoming, and nothing is more contrary to its essence than stasis, immobility, categorical certainty, and faith in the possession of absolute, definitive truths, of the kind that now characterize the bourgeois liberals.

Bourgeois liberalism is powerless to understand the problem posed by the socialist movement; in other words, it does not understand that political and social liberty by themselves are incapable of bringing about liberalism's true goal. It arbitrarily extends its historical experience to the proletariat and makes the absurd claim that the problem of liberty presents itself in the same terms for all social classes. It is clear, for example, that while the conquest of political liberty constituted for the bourgeoisie the sublimation and fulfillment of its own power, which had already come to dominate the economic and cultural sectors, the demand by the proletariat for political liberty and the achievement of it signified no more than the commencement of the struggle for economic emancipation, since it still had no real influence on the control centers of economic life.

In the words of Giuseppe Saragat, one of the most thoughtful representatives of the new Italian socialism, "The proletariat is not trying to remake history from its inception; on the contrary it is doing no more than bring to completion an age-old task that was begun at the beginning of human society. . . . The idea of liberty is not born with the proletariat but with mankind, with the first ray of spiritual self-awareness in man. The task of the proletariat is to bear higher and farther the torch that was passed on to it, in the dramatic turmoil of history, by the classes that came before."

In sum, the proletariat can rightly say that the legacy of the liberal function has passed to it. On one condition, however: that the poor, the working class, and the socialist movement demand the transformation of bourgeois society inasmuch as they become able, thanks to both the theory to which they adhere and the capacities they possess, to make it really better.

Their long opposition has made the socialists too accustomed to conceiving of socialism in polemical terms and in terms of pure force: bourgeois society is rotten, bourgeois society is full of discord, vice, and injustice, so let us smash it. One wants to say to them, Steady on. In dealing with society, the only people who smash things are those who know how to build them; or put another way, you get rid of the old

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only by building the new—if for no other reason than that social life cannot admit periods of arrest and regression, from which the first to suffer are the proletarians. It is no longer enough to demonstrate on paper that socialist society is more just and rational. It has to be made to work in practice, and to do that abilities are necessary, and abilities cannot be improvised, nor is it enough that they are present in tiny minorities.

Even for socialists, the simplistic formulas and bold, miraculous prescriptions that were meant to unlock the secret of the future have had their day. By now there are numerous socialists who concede that the goal, or rather a goal, an intermediate stage, can be set only in very general terms, and that what has to be done is to adapt to circumstances and to a world in continuous, vertiginous transformation; that it is necessary to measure ourselves against actual experience and hold on tight only to a few fixed points of reference, for the truth is that only out of movement, out of experience freely undertaken, will we receive any guidance for tomorrow.

The events of the war and of the postwar period, especially in Russia, have led to the abandonment of the old centralizing, collectivist program that made the state the administrator and universal controller of the rights and liberties of all. No one any longer believes, as he once did, that the simple fact of expropriation, by which productive enterprises are transferred into the hands of the collectivity, will bring about an apocalyptic transformation—with levels of production and wealth multiplied; work loads lightened and made a source of delight; mankind freed at last from material enslavement; struggles, social classes, and wars abolished automatically; and brotherhood, justice, and peace triumphant.

For serious, intelligent, educated socialists—indeed, for society's entire management elite—these things are by now viewed as fairy tales that it is healthier not to discuss. Above all, everyone now sees clearly the dangers of bureaucratic elephantiasis, the intrusive state, the rule of the incompetent, the stamping out of all individual autonomy and liberty, and the loss of any incentive for managers or their subordinates. Let us not even dwell on the problem of human happiness.

At this point the prevailing tendency in the socialist camp is in favor of forms of management that are as autonomous as possible, untrammeled and suited to the various types of enterprise, forms that take into account the whole gamut of different needs. These forms might include municipal management, cooperative management, guild management, management by trust, mixed management in which the general interest is incorporated into particular interests, individual and, accordingly, family management as tradition, technology, and the environment dictate, and so on. The notion of an industrial, commercial, and agricultural state has grown faint, except when the discussion turns to essential public services. Indeed, I would go farther: no socialist any longer makes any attempt to defend a priori, in general terms, the prescription that property must be socialized. Many eminent thinkers (I note the recent striking conversion of G.D.H. Cole, one of the most perceptive British socialists) are beginning to adopt the view that for some branches of industry the most important problem is democratizing the command structure of the factories and the control of their technical and social management in the interests of the collectivity. Even in the most progressive and routinized areas, in which by now the possibility and the utility of socialization is evident, care is taken to state that in any event it can be implemented not at a stroke, but only gradually, in slow stages, with an adequate corollary of experience and capacity. In sum, it appears to me that the quite justified reservations that, in the name of liberalism, might once have been advanced against the abstractness and the utopianism of the old socialist programs are on the way to being extinguished through the victory of common sense, experience, the practical lessons learned by the movement, and above all assumption of the responsibilities of government.

I have noted that the liberal position is distinguished by faith in liberty not only as an end, but also as a means. Liberty can never be

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won through tyranny or dictatorship, or even through being granted from above. Liberty is a conquest, a self-conquest, which is preserved only through the continual exercise of one's faculties and individual autonomies.

For liberalism, and hence for socialism, observance of the *liberal method*, that is, the democratic method, of entering the political contest is fundamental. This is the method that in its essence is utterly permeated with the principle of liberty. It can be summed up in a single word: self-government. The liberal method intends peoples and social classes, like individuals, to administer their affairs by using their own capacities, without coercion or paternalistic intervention. Its great pedagogical virtue consists in making sure that there exists a climate that compels all men to exercise their highest faculties, in putting in place institutions that induce them to participate actively in social life. It bears as its fundamental premise the principle that the free conviction of the majority, just as it is the best way to arrive at truth, is also the best means of guaranteeing social progress and protecting liberty. On the political level, it can be defined as a complex of rules of the game that all the parties in contention commit themselves to respect, rules intended to ensure the peaceful coexistence of citizens, social classes, and states; to restrain competition, which is inevitable and indeed desirable, within tolerable limits; to permit the various parties to succeed to power in turn; and to guide the forces of innovation that will arise from time to time into legal channels.

More than a system of political mechanics, it is intended to be a sort of *pact of civility* to which men of all faiths bind themselves in order to salvage the attributes of their own humanity out of the struggle. For all that it is not susceptible of a rigid definition, it could be said to be crystallized in the principle of popular sovereignty, in the system of representative government, in respect for the rights of minorities (in practice, the right to opposition), in the solemn recognition of a few fundamental rights of the person that have been definitively accepted by the modern conscience (freedom of thought, freedom to meet, freedom of the press, freedom of organization, freedom to vote, and so on), and in the explicit disavowal of recourse to violence.

The liberal method of taking part in the political contest cannot be qualified; it is not and cannot be either bourgeois or socialist, conservative or revolutionary, though its very nature tends to make it favor the forces of progress. As a bond prior to any political tendency, it requires of those who enter into it faith in reason, sacred respect for mankind, the recognition that each citizen enjoys an infrangible sphere of autonomy, and the rooted conviction that nothing strong and lasting is built with brute force, even when it is employed in the service of the fine ideals. Like all refined instruments, it naturally implies a high degree of civilization; rather, it is itself the product of civilization. Sabotage on the part of a single player in the game is enough to prevent the method from functioning properly. But from that it follows that any violence used by the others to keep that individual player in line would be fully legitimate. For example, violence that the proletariat was forced to employ if it found itself under attack by reactionary forces following a great election victory that prepared the way for it to come to power, would be totally justified and completely liberal violence. Liberalism does not exclude violence, but it transforms it into strength by giving it the sanction of morality and right.

Within a few years socialist support for the liberal method and the liberal climate—explicit, total, definitive support—will be a fait accompli. At that point there will be one last step for the socialists to take in order to enter the logic and spirit of liberalism; this step too is inevitable, but it will require a long period of inculcation in the masses; it is that the socialists accept that the democratic method and the liberal climate constitute such a fundamental conquest of modern civilization that they will have to be respected even, and especially, when there is a stable socialist majority at the helm of the government, even when the essential points of the reform program are on the way to being realized. This does not mean

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giving up the teleological goals of socialism; it means only showing respect for a few essential forms of life in common. The socialists too will have to commit themselves to respecting the rights of dissenting minorities and the right of opposition, no matter what the circumstances. They should not be afraid of appearing doubtful or weak by doing so. On the contrary. No faith is more solid than one in which the believer is not afraid of the criticism of his adversaries, which he seeks out as both a stimulus and a boundary. No party or movement is as strong as one that recognizes the right of its adversaries to exist and that declares that on the day of its own victory it will not cast aside the spirit of the liberal method that enabled it to grow from a small and weak minority into a position of dominance. Socialism will be liberal on the day it is able to pronounce a noble and conclusive word on this subject.

In conclusion, if I were asked to illustrate briefly the practical consequences of the observations made in the course of this essay, I would put the matter as follows.

Until now socialist action has had a predominantly economic slant. Probably it had to be like that, since it would be utterly utopian to prate about morality, spiritual autonomy, duty, support and respect for the democratic method to someone living in indigence and barely able to satisfy the elementary demands of subsistence through exhausting and degrading labor. The permanent attainment of a degree of relative well-being is a *conditio sine qua non*. Everything else is blocked by the presence of material indigence. Indigence is the great enemy, no more or less than privileged wealth. Those who had nothing were always the servants of the powerful. To be hungry is to be morally deaf, and moralistic appeals translate fatally into sermonizing.

But step by step, as economic circumstances get better (and they have already been greatly improved), as the working class proceeds to affirm itself politically and the state offers an opening to new demands, as the bourgeoisie, or at least its most progressive components, no longer opposes with its traditional stubbornness the process of proletarian emancipation, that of culture and morality must come to the top of the agenda, for otherwise the movement will lose its way and grow corrupt. Socialism can no longer limit itself to reforming the external aspects of social life. Any emancipation aimed solely at reducing or eliminating oppression from the social environment, any liberty that was purely negative, unaccompanied by a reaffirmation of the eternal values of the spirit, would mean liberation from one kind of slavery in the name of another kind. Either emancipation will be total—body and soul—or it will not occur.

Thus it is some consolation to observe that in recent years spiritual demands of this type have been finding expression, however hesitant, within the working class, thanks to the same syndicalist movement that had appeared deaf to all questions except those involving hours of work and wage levels. The ever-more insistent demand for worker control, for a share in the management of the factory, for the constitutionalization of the factory regime, the battles over issues of principle and dignity, all these things reveal the rise of a new self-respect in the average worker, who is no longer content with material improvements alone but intends to assert his autonomous personality both inside and outside the factory, not only as a citizen but also as a producer. Even the idea of socialization is no longer advanced in purely utilitarian terms of enhanced productivity. A critique of the traditional conception of centralized, collectivist socialism now being heard from within the ranks of socialism documents the existence of new demands for autonomy and liberty.

Our task must lie in the development of these initial, obscure intuitions of the proletarian soul, in revealing the great importance they have for any revision of the theoretical groundwork of the socialist movement. We have to help the proletariat to come to know itself, showing it the real reasons and the effective remedies for the painful state of psychological and social inferiority in which it finds itself, and we have to formulate the results of this process of collective introspection in concrete political terms. We have to

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insist that an ideal of autonomy and liberty should increasingly be the beacon of the socialist movement. We have to make it clear that for a revolution to bear fruit, it is not enough to capture the centers of command, that we have to proceed from the bottom up, not the other way around. We have to conceive of socialism not as the result of the imposition of views by an enlightened minority, but as the result of people coming round to a belief in it out of a long sequence of positive experiences. We should not rely overmuch on passing laws; you can pass all the laws you like, but if they do not validate an objective state of affairs that is actually coming about and are not based on actual behavior, too often they turn out to be fruitless efforts. We have to have more faith in our own powers, to work, experiment, and struggle without prerequisites and excessively rigid programs; we only need to be faithful to a few fundamental directives. What really counts in the last analysis is the process of raising the masses and reforming social relations on the basis of a principle of justice that harmonizes with respect for the liberty of individuals and groups. Routine deference to a program that is now a hundred years old is simply irrelevant in too many respects.

Before ending this brief essay on liberal socialism I would like to indicate summarily what appears to me to be, in outline, the mental structures and subjective attitudes of the liberal socialist. The liberal socialist, faithful to the great lesson arising out of modern critical thought, does not believe that it can be scientifically and rationally shown that socialism's empirical solutions are the best ones, nor even in the historical necessity of the advent of a socialist society. He does not delude himself that he possesses the secret of the future, does not think that he is the custodian of the ultimate, definitive truth about the social universe, and does not bow down before dogmas of any sort. He does not believe that the socialist regime must be, and that it will come about over the course of centuries because of some law that transcends the will of human beings. Indeed, viewing the matter with a cold eye, he might even admit as a hypothesis that the forces of privilege, injustice, and the opposition of the many in the interest of the few might continue to prevail. His motto is: Socialism will be, but it might not be. It will be if we want it and if the masses want it, through a conscious creative effort.

In this doubt, in this virile relativism that gives a powerful impulse to action and wishes to leave plenty of room for human will in history; in this critical demon that obliges one continually to review one's position in the light of fresh experience; in this faith in the supreme values of the spirit and the marvelous animating force of liberty, end and means, climate and lever, lies the state of mind of a socialist who has sailed away from Marxist seas and touched land on the shores of liberalism.

Action is his true standard. He is a socialist because of a whole ensemble of principles and experiences and because of convictions formed in the study of social phenomena; but he is a socialist above all out of faith, sentiment, *active* attachment—this is the point, the real criterion—to the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Whoever adopts this cause as his own can act only in the spirit of liberalism and in the practice of socialism. □

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Bogdan Denitch

NOT ALL BOSNIANS YET

Tom Nairn's provocative article (Fall 1993, "All Bosnians Now?") deserves a fuller reply than I can provide in a brief rejoinder. Nevertheless, a few notes might be appropriate.

Nairn is right. "Balkanites" *are* irritated when the historical divide between Byzantium and Catholicism or Islam and Europe is invoked by "Western" commentators to explain the crimes and furies released by a nationalism mobilized from above in former Yugoslavia.

Some of us even consider ourselves no less "Western" than he. And more "Western" than, let us say, the National Fronters in England, Basque ETAers, IRA and Protestant extremist killers in Ulster, not to mention sundry chauvinist quasi-fascist nationalist parties and movements of Western Europe.

Ethnic chauvinism is no more or less present among masses of soccer fans in Britain than it was in Croatia, Bosnia, or Serbia. In fact, the first armed paramilitary groups in the former Yugoslav states *were* recruited from the soccer fans, who already had a history of fighting all and sundry, not too different from the British soccer fans. The difference was that the new political elites that chose to mobilize support with nationalist legitimation *armed* their thugs. Most of these were no more "historically shaped" than most individual British soccer gang members, whom they matched in loutish illiteracy. *Intellectuals* were believers and spreaders of the nationalist myths, not the combatants, who were often much more open about their own motives for fighting, which are similar to those of post-disaster looters. That is, greed, the opportunity to settle real or imagined accounts, and the chance to—for once in their alienated lives—wield power over unarmed helpless others.

Rebecca West's masterpiece *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* seems to fascinate Nairn and a whole host of Western observers of the present-day Yugoslav tragedy. But West was writing from a point of view that was almost completely pro-Serb and strongly pro-Yugoslav. That is, her guide "Constantine" was a Serbian nationalist of Jewish origin who managed to convince her that Islam had been an unalloyed catastrophe, that Croats were hopelessly corrupted by years of culturally shallow Austrian rule, and that only Serbs rooted in an imagined vibrant Byzantine and national tradition could save Yugoslavia and hold back the eastward march of Germanic culture, commerce, and power.

That was of course dangerous nonsense, since Serbian domination of the first Yugoslav state made it an all-too-ready victim of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. It also encouraged the growth of the vicious defensive Croatian chauvinism that makes the creation of a democratic Croatian state so difficult today. Nairn to the contrary, the large majority of Serbs in Croatia today do not live anywhere near the old military frontier (the Kraina) and are properly frightened of the consequences of becoming second-class citizens in a Croatian state run by right-wing nationalists and returned fascist exiles.

Again, Nairn to the contrary, most Bosnians are urbanites on whom the primacy of national identity was forced by a bankrupt political class. Twenty-eight percent voted against all nationalist parties by voting for the social democratic Reformists or the former Communists. The Reformists won the elections in Tuzla and the center of Sarajevo. More than 25 percent of the electorate did not vote at all, and a substantial number who did vote for the Serbian, Croatian and Muslim parties did not expect a partition or civil war. Huge mass demonstrations against the civil war took place in Sarajevo just before the Serbian aggression

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that began the war. Why on earth does Nairn, like the UN and like Vance, Owen, and Stolterberg, keep insisting that the nationalists represent a majority of the Bosnian population? There is no evidence to prove that. A great deal of evidence exists to the contrary. (This is much like the case of the separatists in Georgia, who demand an independent state although they number only 17 percent of the population.)

Nairn seems to believe that nationalism (*his* decent and democratic nationalism to be sure, not the ugly blood and soil real-life thing) represents authentic democracy. Why otherwise write godawful stuff like, "Democracy is people power. And in this region people are primarily communities, the democratic impulse is strong but also collective, ethnic rather than individual or abstract"? But democracy, as we should know by now, is more than the untrammeled rule of a mob. It includes individual rights and the right not to be a part of a collectivity. Just as it must include the right of individuals to organize collectively along class or national lines it must include the right of individuals and minorities not to be a part of the national collectivity, particularly as defined by the momentary nationalist leaders. It is worse when national and religious identities are combined.

It is the failure to understand that point that makes a settlement in Northern Ireland so difficult. Does being Irish necessarily mean being Catholic? Or subject to Catholic laws on matters like divorce, abortion, and the place of religion in schools? Can one be a full *citizen* of Croatia and not be a Croat? What happens when your child is asked in public whether she is a Catholic or needs to be excused from religious instruction? Can a non-Muslim be an equal citizen in an Islamic state? Can the over 30 percent who are non-Serbs be equal citizens in a state that defines itself as the national state of the Serbs and uses the symbols of Serbian history and the Serbian Orthodox Church in public institutions and schools? It is this type of issue, not in the least bit specific to former Yugoslavia, that makes the revival of nationalism as a major factor in mass politics so problematic and dangerous to democracy.

Last but not the least is the problem of defining the really existing nationalism of the present day. It will not do to invoke Mazzini and the liberal nationalism of the nineteenth century or, for that matter, the nationalism of the national liberation movements. Those had their problems too, but they were of a different sort. Present-day nationalism stresses the centrality of the imagined national community to political mobilization and action. It is not about cultural autonomy or equal rights. More often than not it is about imposing a view, very often a minority view, of what the proper national (or religious) identity of the citizens must be by force and terror. The IRA and the Basque ETA are good examples. So are Muslim fundamentalists in many countries.

In a real world where more and more people live and work in countries where they were not born and where they are a minority, this new nationalism is an obvious threat to democracy. For one thing, it defines the citizens of the polity nationally and therefore reduces all others to second-class citizens. In most, though not all, cases, new nationalists do not permit everyone to become a part of the politically dominant nation. Membership is only open to those who are born into it. Clearly this is incompatible with democracy. But I will not cheat: it is not on those extreme examples that I base my argument that in an increasingly integrated and cosmopolitan world nationalism is hostile to democracy and pluralist societies. It is anti-modern and anti-democratic in its basic impulse and that is why it is attractive to the present postmodernist academic obscurantists. Nairn does not really belong in that company. He should leave it.

Tom Nairn Replies

Two general attitudes seem to surface in all arguments about the post-Yugoslav wars. The first is the one with which Denitch begins: Slavs of all sorts are annoyed if it is suggested that some special historical curse attaches to them and their region—that they are more fated or imprisoned by the past than people in the

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West. The second is the one he then goes on to defend: ex-Yugoslavs are pretty much like anyone else, with similar quotients of soccer hooligans, family concerns, and citizen disgruntlements. If they are currently behaving differently (therefore) this must be because they have been pushed or lured into it, by the "new political elites" and intellectuals who provide legitimation for widespread thuggery.

There is a more general thesis behind this view of Bosnia. If the Bosnians are like anyone else, then their dilemma could (at least potentially) be fairly typical too. The whole post-1989 world—"increasingly integrated and cosmopolitan"—may be threatened by such elites and intellectuals, and the ideological form this threat takes is nationalism. Because the latter is essentially atavistic—"anti-modern and anti-democratic"—it should be contested in equivalently general, uncompromising terms. A sense of hurt and rage informs this comment, most recognizably in the remarks on that "godawful stuff" about people being communities, and democracy *having* to assume national or ethnic forms.

I suppose what I was suggesting is that neither of these attitudes can really be right. Generally speaking the South Slavs are not more imprisoned by a specific history than anybody else. Not more; but also, not less. They rightly resent the imputation of backwardness and primitivism. But there is no such imputation in suggesting that this part of the world may have a particular inheritance that helps to explain a lot of what has happened since the 1980s. Particularity is a universal plight, not a selective blight. It applies equally (for instance) to the integrated cosmopolitan elites whose particular aspiration is escape or exemption from godawful communitarianism.

Like Denitch, I belong to such an elite. It was traditionally dominant in Scotland, where our opposite of nationalist fate was still another version of All-the-Sameism. That British variety of the cosmopolitan ethos began to collapse around us in the 1960s, most sensationally in Northern Ireland. But if nationalism has reasserted itself there (and in more civil forms in Scotland and Wales) this is not really ascribable solely, or even primarily, to "mobilization from above" by new elites or a few deluded ex-metropolitan converts like yours truly. The old building crumbled about us, somewhat more gradually and (until Thatcher) gracefully than in Eastern Europe. Seismic effects have been (so far) confined to Ireland, probably because of fault lines there analogous to those in Yugoslavia. But whether abrupt or gradual, it was a movement of the ground under our collective feet that altered the appeal of ideas and the social leverage obtainable by mobilization (including the production of ethnic delusions and psychopaths).

On this general theme I recommend the late Frank Wright's study, *Northern Ireland: A Comparative Analysis* (1988). It appeared before the big change and doesn't deal with the Kraina frontier. His chosen comparisons for Ulster are the Germans in Bohemia, the old Polish-German border, French Algeria and the U.S. South. However, I believe he could easily have added a section dealing with Bosnia and the Balkans. In a sense that was what I was trying to outline in the article, though only very crudely. It would take someone with a far deeper knowledge of southeastern Europe to do it properly.

The general point is the vital one, of course. If the outlook for Denitch's cosmopolitanism has worsened since 1989, I don't believe this is mainly due to sabotage, delusion, and thuggery. I remain enough of a historical materialist to want to perceive the force of historical contradictions in what is occurring, and also to want to deny that it's all necessarily bad. Twenty years ago only 44 of the 184 countries represented in the United Nations were in any sense democratic. In 1993, ninety-nine of them are. The European Community tends today to be extolled as a paragon of democratic customs; twenty years ago, three of its present members were apparently hopeless flea-ridden dictatorships. Think of Latin America, then and now. Who, then, could have imagined South Africa evolving into any sort of democratic state (albeit with severe and probably not accidental ethnic problems)?

So don't blame "nationalism" as such. It is surely not "anti-modern and anti-democratic" *in its basic impulse*, but in a temptation that arises from the frustration and perversion of that impulse. □

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Oliver Conant

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE *NEW YORKER*, NEW AND OLD

The lengthy tenure of the old *New Yorker*'s editors, Harold Ross and William Shawn, has been followed by the quick succession of Robert Gottlieb and Tina Brown. Both were installed by Si Newhouse, the media tycoon who bought the magazine in the 1980s.

Did the Newhouse purchase and hirings make the magazine new? Is the magazine Brown is currently editing—has been editing ever since October 5, 1992—old or new, and in what sense? The cover of that first issue, which shows a purple-haired, London-style punk, lolling in a horse carriage driven by a formally attired coachman with a slightly surprised expression, seems to propose that *something* new is in town—but has her first year made good on the promise?

Certainly Gottlieb made a number of appreciable changes. His casual manner, youthful interests, and informal dress, contrasting so markedly with the notoriously formal and reserved Shawn, eventually were reflected in the magazine's pages. Photography was introduced for the first time, along with color drawings. The "Goings on About Town" section was spruced up, with little boxed reviews and drawings. In the same consumer-friendly spirit, Gottlieb expanded the minimalist table of contents; it actually became a reliable quick guide to the magazine's contents, as tables of contents are in most other magazines.

Gottlieb's enthusiasm for pop culture—he was said to own an extensive collection of Elvis Presley dolls, one of which he kept prominently displayed on his desk—made for another change in direction. No longer was the *New Yorker* to be, as Dwight Macdonald once put it, a "plot of artificial grass, fenced off from American mass culture"; it displayed a new hospitality toward not just the ephemera of pop culture, but *low-down* ephemera, like those Presley dolls. These were treated with a kind of blandly genial advocacy, as in the travelogues of Calvin Trillin or the columns extolling the delights of roadside eateries by Jane and Michael Stern.

Brown has eschewed encounters with folksily *outré* corners of American life, returning the focus of the magazine to urban matters and cosmopolitan concerns. In practice this has meant Manhattan doings, but there are also frequent reports from Washington and London—Tina Brown's home base and a source for a good many writers. The "doings" in question—whether in New York, Washington, or London—very often are those of people in the public eye. Whether it's Julian Barnes on the latest ministerial sex scandals and the squabblings of the Royal Family or a "Talk" piece on the shenanigans at the seventieth birthday party celebration for the CBS producer Don Hewitt, "creator of '60 Minutes,'" celebrityhood and the worship of celebrities has crept increasingly into the *New Yorker*'s coverage. This comes at a cost to the magazine's tone and even to the independent curiosity of its writers: celebrity as its own rationale appears to have already discouraged writers from turning in the sort of piece on eccentric unknown New Yorkers—New Yorkers who despite their obscurity were in some way interesting—that used to be a staple of the "Talk" pages. The reporter who provided the

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"you are there" for the Hewitt party steps back at the end of the piece and tries for the old, light, *New Yorker*ish tone of detached amusement, observing, "It's a pleasure to find that some successful people are still willing to make fools of themselves." But it doesn't quite work—that phrase "successful people" has lead in it.

A more salutary change is a new sharpness in the *New Yorker*'s political outlook. "Comment," a new department that appears every week at the front of the magazine, has become a place for liberal-to-radical editorializing about (to choose a few examples at random) systemic obstacles to democracy in Haiti, the plebiscitarian fantasies of Ross Perot, Clinton's crime bill, civil broils in Nicaragua, the deceptive benefits and real cost of hate-crime laws, and the *Wall Street Journal*'s belief that the murder of Dr. David Gunn by a right-to-life fanatic can be blamed on sixties radicalism. Written by Hendrik Hertzberg, late of the *New Republic*, by our own Paul Berman, and a few others, these pieces are refreshingly free of the atmosphere of unargued assumption and piety that used to envelope the *New Yorker*'s liberalism.

Berman, indeed, was the occasion for another, perhaps not unrelated, departure for the *New Yorker*. His combative debut appearance in the magazine was a piece on William F. Buckley's reluctant acknowledgment, in the wake of the Buchanan campaign, of anti-Semitic sentiment among his (Buckley's) colleagues. In the piece Berman approvingly cited Buckley's characterization of Gore Vidal's notorious 1986 *Nation* article on Jewish neoconservatives as an instance of "classic bigotry." Vidal's reply, with Berman's response, appeared in a following issue. For the first time in its history the magazine had published a letter from a reader objecting to something in its pages. Even at the height of the controversy surrounding Hannah Arendt's series "Eichmann in Jerusalem," which originally appeared in the *New Yorker*, the magazine maintained its ban on reader mail.

Celebrity worship is so much a part of American culture now that it may seem unfair to blame Brown for the action of this powerful force on her magazine. There can be little doubt, however, that the rising level of glitz is the single most significant change brought about by her editorship. Brown is herself of course a veteran of celebrity journalism: she once edited *Tattler*, the British gossip journal, and went on to become editor of the ailing *Vanity Fair* before taking on her current assignment. By all accounts Brown "rescued" *Vanity Fair*, meaning she increased its circulation; but she also ended the brief period during which the magazine was the subject of conversation among people who don't ordinarily read fashion magazines, which after all may well turn out to have been its sole distinction.

In statements made around the time she took over, Brown let it be known that she wanted to restore the magazine to the luster of its earliest incarnation under Harold Ross. This strikes me as wishful thinking; the attitudes and style of the *New Yorker* of the twenties, when the magazine was in its fey youth, are surely unrecoverable. A glance through the files of those first issues reveals such a different world! Part of the large difference of that world, surely, is that it had not yet undergone the conditioning of having a *New Yorker* long in its midst. The *New Yorker* of the twenties is a number of rather startling things all at once: a scrappy town newspaper, a sophisticate's gossip or tipster's sheet; a "humor" magazine in the antique, anarchic mode of *Judge* and the early *Life*; a vehicle for a kind of Menckenian satire aimed at the "booboisie" of the hinterland, all the old ladies in all the Dubuques that it was not edited for. None of this is available today—American life has simply changed too much.

Brown took Gottlieb's innovations and ran with them. There's lots of color, including color photography. Richard Avedon is now the staff photographer. His austere frontal black and white portraits, mostly of celebrities, spill over the magazine's pages—a recent "Portfolio" of his work took up forty pages—and compete with Annie Liebowitz's Gap ads, also austerely frontal, also in black and white, also

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of celebrities. The table of contents has been revamped beyond Gottlieb's modest modernization—now, for the busy page turner, the pieces are provided with punchy little summaries: "Rabin and Arafat had to do it, Washington figured out how" reads one for a "Letter from Washington." On the newsstands, the magazine now comes half-wrapped in some sort of translucent material that advertises its most alluring "features." All this is industry standard, of course; it's amazing to think that the *New Yorker* once blithely ignored all these commercial inducements, that just as one could never imagine Shawn or Ross speaking of books as "product" the very word "feature" for one of their articles would have seemed a vulgar impertinence.

But if the *New Yorker* is now not the genteel creation it once was, it's still not quite as ghastly as certain of our neoconservative friends have lately made it out to be. Hilton Kramer, in the *National Review*, and Joseph Epstein, in the *Times Literary Supplement*, have bemoaned and decried Tina Brown's advent, attacking her with their customary blunt instruments. Epstein, writing in early September of 1992, when he had only one issue to go on, confidently predicted that Brown's *New Yorker* would soon descend to the level of *Vanity Fair*. That hasn't happened. It may still, of course, but, going on the evidence of the first year's issues, by and large Brown has steered clear of the kind of article that, according to Epstein, when he read them in *Vanity Fair*, used to give him "the intellectual equivalent of a hang-over," leaving him to wonder why ever he had "read eight thousand words last night on William Kennedy Smith or Count von Bulow or Camille Paglia." For his part Kramer is sure that "everything about the magazine is now corrupt: its graphics, its language, its politics . . . Tina Brown has performed the remarkable feat of combining in a single magazine the worst features of *Vanity Fair,* the *Nation*, the *Village Voice* and *Rolling Stone*, while extinguishing the last traces of civility from its editorial columns." Kramer, who is of course best known for his own editorial civility, refers to the new *New Yorker*'s reportage and criticism as "malign rubbish."

Kramer's piece appeared in a special section of the *National Review* grandly titled "The Decline of American Journalism"; in it he prepares the ground for his accusation that the *New Yorker* is a mass of corruption by writing darkly of the "cultural revolution" taking place in America's better publications, of the universal "politicization of reviewing," of the substitution of the tenets of "political correctness and multiculturalism" for "aesthetic judgment." He goes on to charge that "many publications have now succumbed to the belief that thoughtful allusions to the classic achievements of Western culture are in themselves somehow invidious."

Polemicists of Kramer's ilk usually have very little interest in any correspondence between their rhetoric about a thing and any of the thing's actual qualities, so it would be too much to expect him to supply specific examples of these deleterious practices in the *New Yorker*. The issues I have read contain a number of pieces hardly comformable either to PC or multiculturalism: Adam Gopnik on the Whitney Biennial, which he called "a nadir of sanctimonious, self-congratulatory sloganeering"; Martin Amis on heresy-sniffing in a biography of Philip Larkin; Henry Louis Gates on Robert Hughes's anti-PC polemic *Culture of Complaint*; James Traub's "The Hearts and Minds of City College," which reports on what it is like to be subjected to the demagogic lunacies of Leonard Jeffries; David Denby's charming essay "Does Homer Have Legs?" about the author's return to Columbia College thirty years after his arrival as a freshman, to re-enroll in the classes that make up the famous core curriculum and actually read the books denounced and upheld by ideologues on the left and the right. Denby's piece consists largely in recounting his struggle to come to terms with the *Iliad*, long portions of which he quotes, with the (so far as I can see) uninvidious intent of demonstrating the poem's unique force.

Reading pieces like these has compensated somewhat for the magazine's tiresome pen-

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chant for gossip about the rich and famous. And the *New Yorker* is still a place to turn to for both serious and quirky journalism of a sort that would not appear anywhere else: Andy Logan's column, "Around City Hall," the profile of Murray Kempton by David Remnick, the effusions of Harold Brodkey, Janet Malcolm's remarkable three-part article on the Sylvia Plath cult. The graphics, which Kramer mysteriously finds so corrupt, offer compensation of another kind—although whether they make up for the visual assault of some of the ads, the sock-in-the-eye vulgarity of the Versace ads in particular, is another matter. Fiction writers have cause for complaint—the number of stories has been cut to one per issue, effectively halving the market for serious short fiction—but the *New Yorker*'s artists have never been given so much space, and some of them, notably the Dufyesque J.J. Sempe, have used the opportunity to advantage. Acting as a sort of artistic curator, Brown has run marvelous old covers and cartoons: an elegant Rea Irvin cover from 1925, "Pipes of Pan" (Irvin was the originator of the magazine's famous "Eustace Tilley," the dandy who every year gazes gravely at a butterfly through his monocle); a full-page cartoon from the thirties, heavily redolent of the era, showing two plutocrats at their cigars in what looks like a boudoir, a flamboyant looking woman sprawled out drunkenly on a couch behind them, with the caption: "I never told her about the depression. She would have worried"; a splendid, poignant cover from the fifties, showing two well-dressed couples in a small open boat far out on a big lake at dusk, the men bent over a clearly malfunctioning outboard motor, the women looking despairingly toward the lights of the boathouse and the party twinkling far away on the shore.

When I was an infant my parents papered the walls around my crib with *New Yorker* covers. This was in the mid-fifties. Both academics, they may have been trying to save a little money, but I don't think the savings on nursery wallpaper was what led them to decorate my room in this way. Recently, when the time came for my wife and me to worry about decorating our newborn son's room, my mother half jokingly suggested that I also might want to use *New Yorker* covers—they were so colorful, so cheerful. I remember I smiled and said nothing, but that it was clear to her that I did *not* want to use *New Yorker* covers.

A year's worth of *New Yorker* covers is undeniably a cheery sight. If one took care to omit some of the grimmer and stranger covers that Brown, in a bid for provocative social relevance, has lately ordered—the robotic Art Spiegelman schoolchildren piling out of a schoolbus bearing automatic weapons, Edward Sorel's dinosaur-headed Hollywood executives, the ominous streetsweeper with an AIDS ribbon by Sue Coe, behind him a darkly looming St. Patrick's Cathedral—even this year's covers would look nice around a crib.

My resistance stemmed largely from my sense of my parents' relation to the *New Yorker*, and how it differed from my own. Decorating a nursery with the weekly face of a magazine spoke a degree of connection between it and their intimate, daily lives that I could not share. The magazine and whatever they thought it stood for—its pose, which was also a promise of a certain kind of spiritual superiority to the governing context of American life—was evidently in accord with some aspect of their basic sense of themselves. I've noticed that progressive schoolteachers are still in the habit of decorating their classrooms with *New Yorker* covers, so something of this sentiment lives on; but I doubt that most people have a spiritually proprietary sense about the *New Yorker*—or any magazine. A love-hate relationship, yes. But not the comfortable automatic identification, the proximity that prompted the editors of the old *New Yorker* to lead off their "Talk" pieces with OVERHEARD . . . in capital letters. The sense of a magazine's being in such close accord with one's own sense of self seems less available in these noisier times. But perhaps we're better off without that sense—perhaps the task of soul-making, in Keats's phrase, can be carried on just fine without it. □

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Murray Hausknecht

ANOTHER CHOICE OF COMRADES

After losing a national election a party reassesses where it stands and what it must do to recoup its fortunes. It is now the Republicans' turn. One early conclusion is the necessity to return to a vision of the party as "a big tent." More specifically, and with the debacle of the 1992 convention in mind, the prevailing wisdom is that the party must avoid identification with the religious right. But not everyone agrees.

Patrick Buchanan continues to elaborate the themes of his convention speech, and in "The Coming Conservative Century," an essay in the *Wall Street Journal* last February, Irving Kristol advises Republicans to disregard conventional wisdom and actively welcome "religious conservatives." To be sure, "[r]eligious people always create problems since their ardor tends to outrun the limits of politics in a constitutional democracy." Nonetheless, the G.O.P. "must work at accommodating these people," for "by embracing them and shaping their thinking" it will avoid the possibility of a third party and a "restructuring of American politics."

"These people," meanwhile, have not waited for an invitation. They are already active in local party politics, and in some states have become a major political influence. In Virginia, according to a *New York Times* story last June, they were a "dominant force" in the selection of an ultra-conservative slate for statewide offices. In South Carolina, they captured the chairmanship of the party, its executive committee, and many county organizations. A victor in one of the latter contests credited her success, in the words of the *Times* reporter, "to a lack of conviction on the part of the old order." Her own passionate intensity shows through in her insistence that candidates must be "dogmatic, I mean that when it is the word of God you are talking about, you don't compromise."

This example of the "ardor" Kristol rightly fears raises some inevitable questions. Is it merely an expression of political high spirits in the first flush of victory, a naive exuberance that can be harnessed and "shaped" by the Republican establishment? Or is it essential to the political character of those whom Kristol would embrace as his comrades in "the coming conservative century"? More simply, would the G.O.P. survive its embrace of those people?

Of the 60 percent of Americans on the rolls of churches and synagogues and the 40 percent who say they attend services at least once a week, it is evangelical Protestants who are most likely to fill the ranks of "religious conservatives." Although they tend to be moderately educated and clustered in the lower middle- and working-class occupations, they are found at all socio-economic levels, and those who are active within the Republican party are clearly middle class. Evangelicals are overwhelmingly political conservatives, but this is less a result of class location than religious beliefs.

Evangelicalism is a movement within Protestantism cutting across denominational lines and comprising a wide range of beliefs and practices. The overwhelming majority are Baptists, but the movement also encompasses Pentecostals and members of charismatic sects. Nevertheless, within this variety there is a distinguishing set of core doctrines. A central one is a belief in the inerrancy of the Bible as the Word of God and as an accurate historical record of God's work. A second basic tenet is that personal salvation depends on belief in

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Jesus Christ as Savior—men and women without this faith are condemned to eternal damnation. Evangelicals have undergone an experience of spiritual transformation; they are "born-again Christians," committed to publicly testifying to their beliefs and actively proselytizing others. Evangelicals are responsible for saving other people as well as themselves from damnation. Thus, the "old-time religion" that promised hellfire to those guilty of extramarital sex, abortion, divorce, drinking, dancing, cardplaying, and frequenting pool halls and movie theaters. In *American Evangelicalism* (1983) James Davison Hunter writes that embedded in this vision of damnation is an "individuated conception" of a social world in which "the sinful heart and mind of the individual [is] the root cause of and explanation of all human ills." Finally, evangelicals are typically premillennialists; before the Second Coming the born-again Christian will be swept up to heaven in the "rapture" foretold in Revelations. According to Hunter, evangelicals "are, in the main, intransigent" in their commitment to these beliefs.

Evangelical beliefs emerged out of the confrontation of traditional American Protestantism with the forces of modernity, especially from the late nineteenth century on. The doctrine of inerrancy, for example, arose in resistance to historically based biblical criticism. The most intransigent and combative evangelicals in this struggle are the fundamentalists. George M. Marsden writes (*Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 1991) that they are "a subtype of evangelicals, and militancy is crucial to their outlook. Fundamentalists are not just religious conservatives, they are conservatives who are willing to take a stand and to fight." This suggests that fundamentalists are at one extreme of traditional Protestant orthodoxy, and their characteristic militancy has now propelled them into an activist role in Republican intra-party contests. But although they may represent an extreme of orthodoxy, they also share with a much larger body of religious conservatives a common resistance to the claims of modernity.

Modernity here means rationality and its concomitant questioning orientation; it entails the assumption that there are alternative ways of thinking and acting, which must be rationally defended. Cultural pluralism follows from this, and so any given set of beliefs and practices faces challenges, implicit or explicit, posed by the very fact of the others' existence. Finally, a modern society is institutionally differentiated: there is no established religion, and religious beliefs tend to be regarded as belonging to the private sphere. At the level of personal experience, then, the world of modernity is a problematic world in which it is difficult to maintain a commitment to the certainties of inherited traditions; what was once part of the natural order of things is now shrouded in ambiguity.

The challenge modernity poses to religion has not produced, as was once expected, increasing secularization. The continuing strength of religious belief in the United States—a society synonymous with modernity—suggests that its persistence is, in fact, a consequence of modernity itself. Religion, almost by definition, provides a believer with a meaningful and comprehensible universe; it is a familiar beacon among the prevailing ambiguities.

But no religious faith can remain totally immune to the fact of modernity, and among Protestant conservatives—with the exception of their belief in the sinfulness of premarital sex, homosexuality, abortion, and divorce—adherence to the old-time religion has declined significantly. Hunter reports in *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation* (1987) that among students attending evangelical colleges and seminaries the "traditional meaning of worldliness has indeed lost its relevance for the coming generation of Evangelicals." Nancy Ammerman in *Baptist Battles* (1990) reports a similar decline in the mid-eighties among her sample of pastors and lay leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention—at the precise moment when fundamentalists were seizing control of that largest and most influential of Baptist denominations.

There are other discernible accommodations. All evangelicals still subscribe to the principle

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of an inerrant Bible, but the meaning of inerrancy has changed. Once it meant that the Bible represents God's word and must be taken as an accurate historical and scientific record, but among Hunter's college and seminary students "the urgency to uphold or defend a totally unerring Bible appears to have weakened dramatically." In Ammerman's sample the "number of people willing to accept a nonliteral reading of scripture had grown to clearly outnumber the literalists."

On another dimension of belief, involving the issue of cultural pluralism, accommodation is less clear. A premise of evangelical doctrine is the inferiority and eternal damnation of people who do not accept orthodox beliefs. The discourse of traditional orthodoxy was, and remains, to use Hunter's word, "offensive." In contemporary evangelical thought, however, there is "a softening and a polishing of the more hard-line and barbed elements." The belief that all others are damned has not changed; rather, "at the level of social demeanor and social discourse" there has been a shift to greater civility. Or, to put it another way, evangelicals today tend to be more "civilly intolerant with those of other faiths." But since this "civil" intolerance is more a matter of style than substance, it does not prevent "offensiveness" from breaking through—as in the 1980 sermon of a well-known pastor that "God Almighty does not hear the prayer of a Jew."

On the other hand, the younger and better educated "coming generation" of evangelicals would be intensely embarrassed by such statements; there is a decided shift toward greater acceptance of tolerance and pluralism. Only a minority would fit Ammerman's definition of fundamentalism. Fundamentalists "are convinced," she writes in her ethnological study of a northern Baptist congregation (*Bible Believers,* 1987), "that their differences from others make them superior not only because they have something better but because theirs is the only truth, the only right way to live." Where the younger generation is willing to temper the doctrine of biblical inerrancy, fundamentalists "are more sure that every word of scripture . . . is to be taken at face value." Where many evangelicals, like Billy Graham, for instance, are willing to cooperate even with mainline churches, fundamentalists "refuse to cooperate even in the best of causes . . . . *Compromise* and *accommodation* are among the most dreaded words in the Fundamentalist vocabulary."

The loudest and most strident voices appealing to religious conservatives are those of Buchanan and Pat Robertson, who famously denounced supporters of an equal rights amendment to the Iowa constitution as part of an "anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians." Those most likely to respond positively to this vision of the world are fundamentalists. The offensiveness and "ardor" demonstrated here are certainly distasteful to Kristol, but the themes are close to his own. The Kristol who joins the attack on John Dewey as an exponent of "rampant spiritual individualism," who discerns and welcomes "the collapse of 'secular humanism,' " and who believes "[i]t's the traditional spiritual values that we as individuals need"—this quieter, more intellectual voice can be as persuasive, if not more so, than a Buchanan or Robertson. Each, in his own fashion, expresses an ideology that makes fundamentalists his most responsive audience and reassures them that their certainties also foretell another coming event, the "Conservative Century."

In this secular millennium, the "traditional family" with its emphasis on patriarchal authority in husband-wife and parent-child relationships will be restored to its rightful dominance in the culture. But this hope ignores a significant drift away from fundamentalist extremism among religious conservatives. In comparison with those in public universities, Hunter's students are still "stoutly conservative" on, for example, a subordinate role for women in the private sphere, but the majority is not committed to "strict formulations" of this subordination. For these young evangelicals "care for young children is not the exclusive or necessarily principal responsibility

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of the mother." Nor are they happy with fundamentalist militancy and intransigence. At a time when the Moral Majority was still alive and well, a majority of Hunter's respondents "were either neutral toward or disapproved" of its goals and its methods for achieving those goals. Moreover, they believed "that it overall *harms the cause of religion in America.*"

In other words, the response to Kristol's invitation to join the Republican party is more likely to find takers among religious *extremists* than religious *conservatives*—the party's "natural" constituency today and for some time to come. But the more fundamentalists are attracted to the party, the more their incivility and unwillingness to accommodate the demands of cultural pluralism will hinder the recruitment of the coming generations of evangelicals. If the drift Hunter discerns among the young continues, then it is probable that issues like abortion and homosexuality, still highly salient for them, will be less so for their children.

If we indulge an end-of-century impulse to peer into the next one, then perhaps it is not too farfetched to see Bill Clinton and Hillary Rodham Clinton as today's distant outriders of the evangelical middle class of the next century. Just before Clinton's election, Fred Barnes in the *New Republic* quoted a contributor to *Christianity Today*: "Many evangelical women . . . have more in common with Hillary Clinton than with other candidates' wives." Barnes also reported Clinton's strong appeal "to moderate Southern Baptists," who, it might be added, were the losers in the struggle with fundamentalists for control of the denomination in the mid-eighties.

It is of course possible to concede, as Kristol does, that attracting large numbers of fundamentalists is "a problem," but to argue that once alerted to the risk, the Republican establishment could domesticate them. However, this is a far-from-certain outcome of what would be a long internecine battle. Fundamentalists are "willing to stand and to fight" for the militant certainties that define their identities, the springs of their behavior in this world, and their hopes for salvation in the next. In organizational politics these certainties give them an advantage over people like Kristol: because fundamentalists do not recognize the limits imposed by civility they can easily and in good conscience violate them.

But whatever the final outcome of the struggle, if fundamentalists win even local victories, the first order of internal business will be a purge of Kristol and others like him. To use a rough analogy, the latter's situation will be similar to that of liberals in the eyes of the Communist party during the thirties and forties. Liberals, with their talk of respect for the rights of others, were too prone to accommodation with "the forces of reaction"; they were as much the enemy as reactionaries and fascists. So, too, Kristol, who knows that "the limits of politics in a constitutional democracy" require a necessary readiness for compromise, will be defined as an enemy of "the Word of God."

At that point Irving Kristol will have to make still another choice of comrades. □

Maxine Phillips

A BETTER CHOICE OF COMRADES

When it died last April, at age fifty-two, the liberal Christian magazine *Christianity & Crisis* left a host of mourners. The symbolism of its demise occurring close to Easter was not lost on them, and there was speculation about whether it might be resurrected in some form.

Almost a year later, "There's no phoenix rising," says Leon Howell, who was editor from 1985 to 1992. Nevertheless, many social activists acknowledge its legacy. Founded by theologian Reinhold Niebuhr and some associates as a voice of "Christian realism" in contrast to the then-pacifist *Christian Century*, it promoted the U.S. war effort against Hitler. Over the years it was a steady voice for social justice and a critic of U.S. government policies. *C&C* was the first non-pacifist Christian magazine to oppose the Vietnam War. Generations of religious social activists cut their teeth on articles by leading theologians. In recent years it searched out voices "from below" and was a forum for Native

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American, African-American, feminist, third world, and gay and lesbian writers.

Was the journal's death the fate of many small, underfunded magazines, or does its passing say something about the larger picture of the "religious left" and the United States today?

The answer is not clear. Certainly the recession had a major impact. Costs went up and subscriptions, which had peaked around 20,000 in the late seventies, leveled off at around 13,000. Every year, more of his time was spent fund raising and less on editorial work, Howell recalls. In fact, the death of the magazine followed the most successful fund-raising campaign ever, when the magazine brought in more than $300,000 in donations and grants, $100,000 more than ever before. "It was the first year that less than 50 percent of our income came from subscriptions, and we couldn't see continuing to fund raise at that level," says Howell. Renewals were not for the two- and three-year periods that magazines depend on.

The economic decline was linked to the political climate, for during the Reagan-Bush years, when mainline Protestant denominations such as the Methodists and Presbyterians were under assault for being "too liberal," congregations that used to send money to national headquarters withdrew their support. The National Council of Churches, the ecumenical expression of mainline Protestantism, is struggling for its life. Some denominations were forced to leave urban centers (primarily New York City) for the heartland.

Although many readers were jolted by the magazine's consistently liberal stands, a core remained faithful and responded well to fund appeals. But this was an aging core, highlighting a problem faced not only by the magazine but by organized religion generally: the lack of young people.

Two focus-group meetings in New York were not encouraging. "We found that the younger people were just not interested in reading a magazine," says former *C&C* managing editor Vivian Lindermayer. Although the topics were of interest to them, that interest did not translate into subscriptions. "For example, our AIDS issue sold so well we had to reprint it, but we didn't get any new subscriptions as a result."

Other magazines have similar problems. *Sojourners*, an evangelical ecumenical magazine, has gone from 50,000 subscribers to 25,000. Its publisher, Joe Roos, believes that with more time pressure in their lives people get their information from television or computer networks. Those in their thirties and forties have the demands of family life, and younger people just may not be reading. In 1980, he notes, the median age of a *Sojourners* subscriber was thirty-three. By 1987 it had gone to forty-seven and has stayed there.

"The problem is broader than Protestantism," says Roos. *Sojourners* readers are mainline Protestant, Catholic, Protestant evangelical, and members of historic peace churches, which are pacifist. None of those groups are attracting young people.

It's not unusual for young people to leave the church, says long-time social activist and *C&C* contributing editor Howard Moody. In the past they have returned when they had children. This isn't happening.

"Protestantism is in crisis," says Roos. "Traditional mainline denominations do not have life-giving energy." *Sojourners*, which grew from the activities of seminarians in Chicago twenty-two years ago and maintains several ministries in Washington, D.C., has restructured itself to stanch the hemorrhaging of readers. Instead of subscribing, one now joins an organization and receives a publication.

The diversity among Christians who see themselves as progressive highlights another issue. After all, what is the Christian left? No one I spoke with for this article was comfortable with that term. It can include theologically conservative and economically radical people, economically conservative and theologically and socially liberal types. The labels blur.

Twenty-three-year-old AIDS activist Beth Stroud, who arrived at *C&C* as a Union Theological Seminary intern and stayed to edit the book review section in the magazine's last year, mourns the loss of the only publication on the Christian left that was an advocate for gays

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and lesbians. Her experience as a person brought up in a modern mainline church reflects Roos's observation about energy. "It sometimes seems like the only way for a young person to be passionate about religion is to be in conservative movements because that's what's there," she says. She recalls being drawn to the conservative Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship in college even as she struggled with coming out as a lesbian.

Sojourners editor Jim Wallis, in an issue last winter, wrote, "Virtually all the vertical structures of American Christianity are in great distress." The future holds more horizontal relationships and networks, he believes, giving as examples Pax Christi, Witness for Peace, Evangelicals for Social Action, and the anti-hunger lobby Bread for the World. "For much too long," he says," evangelicals have been the Republican Party at prayer, liberals have been easily confused with the left wing of the Democratic Party, and even grassroots religious peace and justice activists have not always distinguished themselves from the politics of other secular and solidarity movements."

For those of us still interested in coalition and multi-issue politics, it's hard not to draw some comparisons with the problems *C&C* faced and those of the Democratic party. Just as the party has been weakened by the perception that it caters to "special interest" groups, so have the denominations suffered. There have been defections, splits, and serious loss of funds. The National Council of Churches was attacked in the eighties by the *Readers' Digest* and the Institute for Religion and Democracy as a commie-symp front. At the same time, many people who have fought the battles against conservatives within are weary. And young people whose sympathies lie in the liberal direction are not drawn to churches, much as "single-issue" activists shun the Democratic party.

C&C could never be a magazine only for people concerned about specific issues or constituencies. It had to be a magazine of a coalition. That coalition no longer holds in the Democratic party, nor does it hold in mainline Protestantism. This does not mean the end of liberalism among Protestants. There are plenty of people out there staffing soup kitchens, involved in urban ministry and peace and justice activities. Still, there is no strong institutionally identifiable movement for the "left" as there appears to be for the Christian right.

Did *C&C* collapse because it was too anchored to dying institutional structures? It tried to bridge the space between what was and what is being born. The bridge couldn't bear the weight, but the space must still be crossed. □

Lawrence Mishel and Jared Bernstein

THE JOYLESS RECOVERY

We are stuck in the midst of the most feeble economic recovery since World War II. Gross domestic product (GDP) is currently growing at an annual rate of 2.4 percent, well below the 4.9 percent average for postwar recoveries. The causes of slow growth are the persistence of declining wages and the growth of earnings inequality.

- Wages are declining for virtually all male workers and among low-wage female workers. The wage of a male worker at the 80th percentile (meaning that he earns more than 80 percent of the total male work force) has fallen 1 percent during the recovery and 2.2 percent since 1989. Men with lower wages experienced even deeper wage deterioration—about 5 percent over the 1989–1993 period. At the 90th percentile, however, wages are up 1.2 percent over 1989. Thus, wage inequality among men has grown during the recent business cycle, continuing the 1980s trend.
- Wage growth among women has been concentrated among the highest-paid half of the female work force. The wages of women at the 40th percentile, for instance, did not grow from 1989 to 1993, but wages grew 2 percent at the median and 3.6 percent at the 90th percentile. Thus, wage inequality among women has

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continued to grow during the current business cycle.

- Turning to occupational trends, the early 1990s saw blue-collar wages fall and white-collar wages remain stagnant, continuing the trends of the 1980s. Among men, however, the real hourly wages of both white-collar and blue-collar workers fell during the downturn (1989–1991) and continued to fall during the first two years of the recovery. Since wages fell more for blue- than for white-collar men—5.9 percent versus 2.4 percent—during the 1989–1993 period, there was continued growth in the blue-collar/white-collar wage differential. The wage decline among men over the 1989–1993 period occurred in nearly every occupational group. Among women, in contrast, wages grew in both the downturn and the recovery in nearly every occupational group.

- There has been much discussion of the dramatic growth in the 1980s of the wage differential between college graduates and high school graduates. For instance, the ratio of the average wage of a college graduate to that of a high school graduate grew from 137.7 percent in 1979 to 155.7 percent in 1989. This education-related wage differential grew despite only a modest increase in the wages of college graduates because the wages of non-college-educated workers *fell* a great deal. Between 1987 and 1991, however, the wages of college graduates fell as well; but because the wages of high school graduates fell even faster, the college/high school wage differential continued to grow.

- What has happened to education differentials in the recovery? The decline in the wages of college graduates continued. The wage of the average college graduate fell 0.8 percent between early 1992 and 1993. The wage of non-college-educated workers fell even faster. Among men, wages fell for every educational group except graduate degree holders, a group made up of just 8.7 percent of the male work force. Among women, only those with college or graduate degrees achieved real wage growth. All other women lost between 1 and 2 percent of their hourly wage.

Employment Trends

Employment grew by 1.9 million jobs in the first twenty-eight months of this recovery. Every other postwar recovery produced more than twice as many jobs by the twenty-eighth month. While it is true that fewer jobs were lost in this recession than in prior downturns (a loss of 1.4 million versus 1.9 million jobs), this does not explain the slow pace of job gains during this recovery. If we calculate the net job gain since the prior business cycle peak, we find there have been just 563,000 jobs gained over the current business cycle. This is about 2.8 million short of the average 3.4 million net job gain that occurred in earlier business cycles.

- The most visible indicator of poor economic performance is the failure of the unemployment rate to fall in this recovery. The unemployment rate rose from 5.4 percent to 6.8 percent during the downturn and then rose to as high as 7.6 percent *during the recovery* before falling to the current 6.8 percent level. *This is the only postwar recovery in which unemployment was no lower after twenty-eight months of recovery.*

Joblessness is more widespread than the official unemployment figures indicate. Slow economic growth has forced many workers out of the labor market. This group of labor-force "absentees," not counted among the unemployed, consists of people who have stopped looking for work or never looked for work because they were pessimistic about their prospects.

Part-time and Temporary Work

This recovery can be criticized not only for failing to produce the jobs necessary to lower unemployment, but also for creating too many part-time and temporary jobs. For example, 526,000 (27.7 percent) of the 1.9 million jobs created in the recovery were provided by temporary-help agencies—a remarkable contribution for an industry comprising less than 2 percent of total employment. Another 26 percent of the new jobs were in government, primarily at the state and local level. Only

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880,000 (46.3 percent) of the total jobs gained in the recovery were non-temporary, private-sector jobs.

- Three-fourths of the part-time jobs created in the recovery (482,000) were filled by involuntary part-timers—workers wanting full-time jobs. In July 1993, there were 6.5 million involuntary part-time workers. In contrast, every other recovery saw a significant *reduction* (14.5 percent on average) in the number of people working part time involuntarily.

Equally noteworthy is that voluntary part-time work has grown by just 168,000, and accounts for just 6.7 percent of total job growth during the recovery. Since about 14 percent of the work force typically works in part-time jobs voluntarily, the 6.7 percent expansion during the recovery indicates a decreased worker desire for part-time work. These trends suggest that the rapid expansion of part-time work in the recovery reflects the success of employers in expanding part-time jobs even though employees are shifting their preferences toward full-time jobs.

We are stuck in a vicious circle of slow growth. The fact that wages are falling and good jobs are being lost (and replaced with low-quality jobs) leads to falling disposable income, low consumer confidence, and falling demand. Investors respond to diminished demand by cutting back on investment plans (despite lower interest rates), thus leading to more slow growth, job losses, falling wages—and the cycle feeds back upon itself.

Furthermore, by continuing down the low-wage, low-growth path, we incur great social costs. Poverty rates have been "stuck" at historically high levels. This was true over the 1980s, even in the face of GDP growth rates higher than today's. Families with children are particularly devastated by the scourge of poverty: the poverty rate for persons under eighteen was 21.9 percent in 1992. To the extent that the labor market fails to provide opportunities for persons who want to "play by the rules," alternative opportunities, including crime and public assistance, appear more attractive. □

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Perry Anderson

ON JOHN RAWLS

POLITICAL LIBERALISM, by John Rawls. Columbia University Press, 1993. 401 pp. $29.95.

No work of modern political philosophy, in any language, has generated such a enormous output of learned commentary as John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*. After some twenty years of uninterrupted critical flow, Rawls's new book is billed as a correction of the original, in the light of subsequent discussion. *Political Liberalism* offers abundant—even superabundant—evidence of careful response to the reception of *A Theory of Justice*, in a forest of footnotes to different readings of it. But the attention proves selective, and the result disconcerting.

Rawls's pristine theory argued for two fundamental principles of justice: first, equal political rights and liberties for all; and second, only such social or economic inequalities as are compatible with equal opportunity and yield most benefit to the least well-off. These principles, Rawls maintained, would infallibly be chosen by us if we were to imagine ourselves deciding the form of a just society from the hypothetical standpoint of an "original position," without any knowledge of what might be our particular lot within it. Around this core doctrine, conceived as an updated variant of Kantian constructivism to supersede all latter-day forms of utilitarian calculus, Rawls developed a capacious intellectual edifice, culminating in ethical reflections of noble scope.

Out of the huge literature set off by this construction, what were to be the most pregnant objections to it? Four stand out as most significant. First, the device of the original position was widely convicted of circularity. In order to get the parties in the original position to produce his principles of justice, Rawls had surreptitiously to endow them with sympathies that only the principles themselves could induce. The logical circle betrays the historical *petitio principi*. In effect, far from being a genuinely aboriginal condition, like the state of nature posed in earlier social-contract theory, Rawls's position originates in assumptions possible only with the advent of developed industrial capitalism. The "veil of ignorance" draped around his actors is all too diaphanous: beyond lies the familiar landscape of an established—if not enacted—morality. Among the most obvious signs of the restrictive context of Rawls's theory is the "lexical" ordering of the principles of justice themselves, object of the second common criticism of it. Why should equal liberties always have priority over equal sufficiencies? Material subsistence is a condition of any juridical existence, and its demands have for most of human experience been overriding.

In the advanced capitalist countries of today, the claims of absolute need are rarer than those of relative deprivation. How satisfactory is Rawls's formula for meeting these? The "difference principle"—warranting only those inequalities that are to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged—is the most memorable single thesis of *A Theory of Justice*. But what is its actual import? The massive ambiguity of the Rawlsian theory of justice lies at precisely this point. Is the difference principle a powerful call for an all-but-socialist redistribution of income—since, on one reading, so little of the glaring disparities of wealth that surround us contributes to the well-being of the poor? Or is it, on another reading, simply a sensible defense of the normal operation of capitalism—

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whose constant increase of productivity, raising general living standards, requires precisely the incentive structures, tried and tested by experience, we have today? To grasp the full depth of the indeterminacy at the crux of Rawls's construction, it is enough to note that his work has been applauded imperturbably at one extreme by John Roemer on the left and at another by Friedrich Hayek on the right, each contending that its message coincides with his own. Clearly, both cannot be right. But Rawls's *Theory*, in which the legitimacy of socialism can be mooted on one page and American society held "nearly just" on the next, leaves space for either view. It might be said that, within its framework, the difference principle is politically indifferent. Outside the framework altogether lie the problems of justice conceived on an international scale. The last of the major criticisms of Rawls's work has always been the anachronism of its territorial assumptions. Not just the West, but the nation-state formed the boundary of its imagination.

Twenty years on, what does Rawls have to say about these issues? On the whole, very little. The idea of the original position, he reiterates, is a device of representation—its outcome thus "hypothetical and nonhistorical." Yet the parties to it "must take organizational requirements and economic efficiency into account"—in other words, have internalized modern capitalist imperatives ("thus it is unreasonable to stop at equal division") of an eminently historical kind. On the other hand, the priority of civil liberty over social equality, Rawls now concedes, is "not required under all conditions," but presumes "reasonably favorable circumstances" of prosperity and literacy. The principle of liberty, however, "can easily be preceded by a lexically prior principle that citizens' basic needs be met"—without, apparently, further need of adjustment to his scheme. What, then, of the difference principle? Unlike the principle of liberty, we are told, it is unsuitable for constitutional codification, for its interpretation is nearly always contestable, resting on "complicated inferences and intuitive judgments that require us to assess complex social and economic information about topics poorly understood." That is all the reader gets—in effect, a keep-off sign to the curious. Treatment of international relations is even more clipped. These are merely "problems of extension," which Rawls "leaves aside" to concentrate on "the fundamental question of political justice."

Political Liberalism, in other words, deflects or ignores all the classical difficulties raised by *A Theory of Justice*. It addresses instead a less obvious one. In his original work, Rawls argued that stable realization of the principles of justice required a well-ordered society, in which citizens shared a certain moral outlook—a sense of the good complementing a sense of the right. The latter third of the book, entitled "Ends," explored the shape of such a vision. It is this conclusion, Rawls has decided, that was misguided. For it amounted to a "comprehensive philosophical doctrine" whose effect was not, as he had earlier believed, to fortify the principles of justice, but to jeopardize them. Why should this be so? Because, he now argues, in a modern society there will always be a variety of comprehensive doctrines that are reasonable, if incompatible. Any attempt to make one of them the basis of public reason must therefore be divisive and sectarian—a project that could only succeed by an intolerant use of state power, canceling the first principle of justice itself.

The cure is to be found in the title of the new book. What does the formula *Political Liberalism* denote? The antonym of "political" here is not—as it once would have been—"economic," a liberalism never mentioned in these pages, but "metaphysical." By this Rawls means the larger account of values taught by Kant or Mill, and sketched in their spirit by *A Theory of Justice*. In a strict sense, Rawls's new book is thus not a development of his earlier work: it is an amputation of it. The burden of *Political Liberalism* is an intellectual renunciation, rather than any substantive addition. For Rawls this is no real loss. He believes that his basic theory becomes the stronger for this sacrifice. For in the new version the principles of justice require only a loose

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"overlapping consensus" between the various contending doctrines in society, rather than any deeper sense of ultimate ends shared by its citizens. The more modest aim is a gain in realism, as well as a check against temptation.

How persuasive is this change of mind? It is not hard to resist it. Contrary to his hopes, Rawls's new construction is more fragile than the old. *A Theory of Justice* presupposed a historical time and a national space, but abstracted from them to generate ostensibly timeless principles. *Political Liberalism* introduces history and sociology directly into its justificatory structure, but in a way that exposes rather than heals the original contradiction. For the whole book depends on the thesis that a plurality of incompatible—but reasonable—comprehensive doctrines is a permanent feature of modern societies. But Rawls offers no evidence for this claim, which he seems to think so obvious as to require none. He simply alludes to the religious conflicts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, notes the growth of toleration that followed them, and then concludes that nevertheless "the fact of religious division remains." Given the relentless advance of secularization in all European societies today, the fate of supernatural beliefs today tells, of course, against rather than for Rawls's assumption. Perhaps American anachronism here has misled him. More likely, however, would seem to be a certain philosophical blitheness. The large body of social theory, from many different standpoints, which insists on increasing cultural homogenization as the trend-line of historical development—it includes names all the way from Kant and Hegel to Parsons and Gellner, not to speak of Bell or Fukuyama, or any number of others—appears scarcely to have registered. The point is not that this tradition of thought is necessarily right, but that serious historical evidence and argument is needed to prove it wrong. For this purpose, appeal to theological survivals is futile.

Is it unfair to Rawls to tax this illustration too heavily? It would be good to think so. But his only other examples of the doctrinal plurality prompting the revision of his theory suggest otherwise. What are the comprehensive doctrines whose conflict disables the conclusions of *A Theory of Justice*? In his "model case," they number a tolerant Protestantism in the spirit of Locke and "liberal moral doctrines such as those of Kant or Mill"—elsewhere subdivided into "Kant's moral philosophy" versus "the utilitarianism of Bentham and Sidgwick." It is enough to consider this list to see how trifling the claim of grand incompatibilities actually is. Locke's brand of Calvinism, which did not even give birth to a sect, is long forgotten. Who imagines Kant's imperative is a significant civic inspiration? Where is Bentham's calculus respected? How many recollect so much as Sidgwick's name? The reality is that *comprehensive* philosophical doctrines, of the kind of which Rawls repents, have all but vanished from the contemporary scene. His own retraction is just one more instance of the process he has failed to see, which undermines his grounds for it. One might say that the history he has let into his theory, like air into a sealed tomb, tends to disintegrate rather than preserve it. The only real candidates left for the role of all-purpose visions are, in fact, religious; and to give force to the idea of an "overlapping consensus" as the suitable support for the principles of justice, Rawls is obliged—though not without a tremor of compunction—to declare all major world faiths "reasonable" doctrines that are capable of accepting them. Here distance from reality becomes all but absolute: as if the office of the philosopher was neither to interpret the world nor to change it, but simply to change its interpretations.

Paradoxically, however, Rawls himself is unable to live up to his own self-denying ordinance. For the political liberalism that is supposed to exclude metaphysical vision rests, as he explains, on a "conception of the person" that is a quite traditional species of ontological construct. This is a figure endowed with "two moral powers" (and two only): the capacity for a sense of "justice" as what is "reasonable," and for an idea of the "good" as what is "rational," which together makes possible a society conceived as "fair cooperation." Where

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does Rawls find this person? Not, he confesses, in any "account of human nature as given by natural science and social theory." Rather, it is a "normative conception." Where do the norms, then, come from? Not from any comprehensive philosophical doctrine, but from "plain truths now widely accepted, or available, to citizens generally." What guarantees these are truths? They are "the conceptions of the person and of social cooperation most likely to be congenial to the public culture of a democratic society." In other words, where older doctrines grounded their ideas of identity or value in principled argument, the new dispensation simply appeals to the status quo of our democratic culture—or what purports to be such. In actual fact, of course, most citizens would be bemused by Rawls's short-list of their moral powers, which is essentially a residue of what was once a coherent ethical vision, like one of the broken shards of *After Virtue*. Extracted from their metaphysical seat, they are now assigned inappropriate lodging in the sprawl of public opinion, where they do not belong.

Beyond the fiction of their domicile, however, there is a more serious effect of Rawls's move. What was a latent and subtle circularity in *A Theory of Justice* becomes a gross and explicit one in *Political Liberalism*. For Rawls simultaneously appeals to the natural outlook of a democratic society to found his conception of the person, and to his conception of the person to found the basic structure of a democratic society. The warrant of the doctrine of two moral powers is that it "suits" a society in which justice is conceived as fairness; and the warrant of justice as fairness, with its schedule of fundamental principles and primary goods, is that it "protects" the exercise of the two moral powers. The attenuated idea of a person is the theoretical plinth of a desirable constitution, determining what count as primary goods "in advance" of any further requirements of social life—yet is also no more than an ideological reflex of the culture it is supposed to generate. In a vicious circle, public arrangements are deduced from personal capacities defined as adapted to public arrangements.

More than logical error is at issue here. What the structure of Rawls's argument indicates is a more fundamental feature of his thought. This is an amphibious world, which contains just enough land of real social reference to avoid the tricky deeps of first philosophy (the gesture is roughly: let's start out from where we're at—in other words, Bush-Clinton country), while floating carefully enough on the waters of abstraction to avoid contact with the ground of actual political change (for example: what has happened in the United States since the 1970s). The result is a kind of political *cabotage*, a critique of existing society that clings nervously to its shores. Readers of Rawls might well ask: where is the actual justice in the United States that corresponds to the ideal construct he offers us, if it is based on "plain truths widely accepted by citizens"? The question is never answered. *Political Liberalism* no longer speaks of any contemporary order as "nearly just," but rather of a "moderately well-governed democratic society." The social polarization of the last twenty years might never have occurred. In the entire book, the only place-name from the geography of contemporary America is Malibu. The misery and despair, the greed and violence of the daily urban scene are far away. The social infernos of *City of Quartz* could be on another planet.

Rawls's preoccupations lie elsewhere. He remarks in passing that the tendency of markets is for "background justice to be eroded even when individuals act fairly," without vouchsafing any explanation for this process, and approves of the principle of fiscal redistribution. But "social and economic inequalities in the life prospects of citizens depending on their social origins" are nevertheless "inevitable, or else necessary or highly advantageous in maintaining effective social cooperation." How far the difference principle might mitigate such inequalities is a matter too technical and subconstitutional to detain the reader. By contrast, the state of the "basic liberties" that have priority in the scheme of justice does merit sustained concern. Rawls devotes the two most engaged sections of the book to them.

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The issues he singles out for critical discussion are free speech and campaign finance. The case for the former, he argues, is not to be qualified in the name of protecting the constitution from revolutionary doctrines, on the grounds that they represent a "clear and present danger" to the legal order—there could be restrictions on free political speech only if there were a general constitutional crisis such as a well-governed democracy precludes in the first place. Hence "the free public use of our reason in questions of political and social justice would seem to be absolute." The sentiment is admirable, but the arguments used to support it are often surprisingly lax. So committed is Rawls to his conclusion that he maintains—in defiance of the obvious—that the First Amendment could not be constitutionally repealed, since whatever the Congress might do or the Supreme Court might say, it is "validated by long historical practice"; even pronouncing the Sedition Act retroactively "unconstitutional," whatever its validity at the time, because "it has been tried by the court of history and found wanting." These are not exactly Kantian reasons, but they are consistent with a new inclination to find *ad hoc* warrants for the objects of Rawls's sympathy, wherever they are at variance with the logic of his theory. Protestant religion is manifestly a comprehensive doctrine of the kind *Political Liberalism* debars from a legitimate role in the discourse of public reason. Martin Luther King nevertheless slips past, since his biblical appeals "fully support constitutional values"—likewise Abraham Lincoln, but on opposite grounds, that his pieties have "no bearings on constitutional essentials." No doubt the same could be said of George Bush's call to prayer as the bombers took off for Baghdad, but it is unlikely Rawls would do so.

Free speech is not under serious threat in the United States today. Fair elections, on the other hand, are all but out of reach. Rawls's acknowledgment of the extent of their denial by the power of money is the one radical departure of *Political Liberalism*, where it moves beyond rather than behind *A Theory of Justice*. Equal political liberties, Rawls now stresses, are not enough—they must also be of equal practical worth, which they cannot be so long as elections are fought and won by force of superior wealth. Expressing dismay at Supreme Court rulings that have struck down (mostly nominal) limits on private expenditures in the campaign process, he envisages a measure of public funding of elections to assure "fair value" to each citizen's political rights. But there the matter rests. What institutional structures are required, for the first principle of justice to acquire reality, remains unfathomable—here once again, "how best to proceed is a complex and difficult matter," in which "the requisite historical experience and theoretical understanding may be lacking." On closing *Political Liberalism*, the reader is no nearer a sight of electoral reform in the United States than when opening it. Rawls does not seem to have noticed that for political liberties to have equal worth there would have to be the elementary change of proportional representation in the voting system, as well as equitable funding of the campaigning system. There is no hint in these pages that in "the oldest democratic regime in the world," half of the population never even votes. Instead we are invited—*inter alia*—to patriotic contemplation of "the pride of a democratic people in distinguishing themselves from nondemocratic peoples." The category of a nondemocratic people is an unexpected political *trouvaille*.

Political Liberalism, as many of its reviewers have found, is a disappointing book. Its formal organization is poor, still bearing too many traces of the discrete lectures out of which it has been assembled, with a high rate of repetition and lack of independent direction. It belongs with that peculiar subset of books in which an author sets out to correct or defend a celebrated earlier work, and succeeds only in producing an arid shadow of it—Michel Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* or Alasdair MacIntyre's *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* are companion cases that come to mind. The experience of reading it is one of regret. The imperfect dignity of *A Theory of Justice* remains. If Rawls has taken the wrong turning away from it, a path of reduction rather than

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enlargement, the reason lies in part in a parochial self-enclosure of his intellectual world, now populated all but exclusively by like-minded colleagues and pupils. But it is also a consequence of the impossible desire that haunts his program, what—adapting a phrase from Kant—we might call his unconforming conformity: the dream of extracting a radical alternative to our existing social world from the lineaments of its own description of itself. The contradiction between the postulates of consensus, to which Rawls continually subscribes, and the realities of dissensus, to which his best impulses belong, is incurable. There is no starker expression of it than the innocent passage from one key sentence to the next in the agenda of *Political Liberalism*. "The aim," Rawls writes, is "to work out a conception of political and social justice which is congenial to the most deep-seated convictions and traditions of a modern democratic state. The point of doing this is to see whether we can resolve the impasse in our recent political history; namely, that there is no agreement on the way basic social institutions should be arranged if they are to conform to the freedom and equality of citizens and persons." If the modern state is as described, deep in its democratic convictions and traditions, how could there possibly be a deadlock over the realization of freedom and equality for its citizens? The two halves of the statement fall apart. If he had pursued the logic of the second, rather than the will o' the wisp of the first, becoming less congenial to the state and more critical of its impasse, Rawls would have written a better book. The needed sequel to his major work had another title—*A Theory of Injustice*. □

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RELIGIOUS ROOTS

THE CULTURE OF DISBELIEF: HOW LAW AND POLITICS TRIVIALIZE RELIGIOUS DEVOTION, by Stephen L. Carter. Basic Books, 1993. 328 pp. $25.00.

Stephen Carter is dismayed that liberal culture doesn't take religion seriously. His complaint has hit a nerve. Peter Steinfels, the religion editor of the *New York Times*, praised Carter's "well-honed arguments" in his Saturday column. Bill Clinton read the book while on vacation in Martha's Vineyard and raved about it afterward to a group of religious leaders in Washington. And Carter was granted a softball celebrity interview with MacNeil-Lehrer's Charlayne Hunter-Gault. (Trivialization alert: the interview was taped inside New York's Riverside Church.)

Why all the fuss? A likely explanation is that some members of the liberal establishment—including Stephen Carter himself and probably also our Southern Baptist president—are bothered in equal part by the political power of the religious right and by the cynicism of liberals who would use the antics of demagogues in preachers' robes to dismiss all religion as a delusion or worse. Carter thinks he can salvage a legitimate role for religion in public life while still contesting the politics of the religious conservatives.

That's Carter's aim, but the execution is flawed. In *The Culture of Disbelief*, Carter, the author of *Reflections of an Affirmative Action Baby* and a professor of law at Yale, has actually written two loosely linked essays: an inconclusive ramble through legal issues affecting religion has been sandwiched between two shorter sections that make up a second, polemical essay.

The legal section of the book reviews a number of cases in which Carter believes the courts have improperly constrained the free

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exercise of religion. He notes that it is in the nature of religion to gather adherents into communities where belief and action complement one another. For this reason, Carter writes, the courts are wrong when they treat religious freedom as though it were a mere variant of protected speech and refuse to sanction the religious practices that express the content of belief. According to Carter, such judicial refusals serve to trivialize faith by disregarding the need for religion to fashion a sphere of "autonomy" out of the *materia* of its core beliefs.

American legal theory has always distinguished between freedom of belief, which must not be infringed, and freedom of action, which may be balanced against other public goods. This is an old story, but Carter thinks he detects an ominous new readiness among judges to circumscribe religious action. He cites a case involving Native Americans who were denied the use of peyote in their ceremonies and cases in which Jehovah's Witnesses were made to accept blood transfusions against the tenets of their faith. The courts, argues Carter, should be required to apply the "compelling interest" standard before permitting the state to interfere with unconventional religious practices. Most readers will agree on this point, though some may wonder whether the courts have erred as often as Carter claims.

But Carter's main complaint isn't about the law. It's about contemporary liberal *culture* and the way it allegedly trivializes faith by denying religion a respectful hearing.

This is a peculiar charge to be making in the American context. Savvier critics of our culture—notably Harold Bloom—are astonished by the pull that religion continues to exercise in national life. Carter loads his argument, however, by insisting that liberals' routine acceptance of a religiously grounded voice in public policy debates doesn't really count as long as the voice has its source in the religious mainstream: that is, in the National Council of Churches, the U.S. Catholic Conference, the American Jewish Congress, and so on. For Carter, liberals must still be deeply hostile to faith because they have been up in arms over the Christian right's effort to flex its muscles in the policy arena. Further, some liberals have strongly objected to the efforts of outspoken Catholic prelates—notably New York's John Cardinal O'Connor—to suppress abortion rights.

Carter has two separate quarrels with what he takes to be standard liberal responses to the activism of politically conservative religious folk, whether Catholic or Protestant.

First, he thinks liberals are unduly alarmed by the declared intention of the Christian Coalition and similar organizations to take control of school boards, city councils, state legislatures and the Republican National Committee in order to implement what is politely referred to as a "pro-family" agenda. Although Carter titles one of his chapters "Christian Fascism," he stoutly maintains that the "fear of religiously motivated automatons doing in politics what their leaders command" is a "delusion." Elsewhere, he adds that there is "no reason to presuppose" that the religious Americans who would enter a newly opened public square "will advocate positions that are inimical to American freedom." One wonders just how Carter can be so sanguine on this point, since a major contention of the book is that liberal culture has no choice but to accommodate religious rhetoric in the public square or else enraged believers will rise up and dismantle the structures of liberal democracy itself.

But leave this contradiction aside. Carter's real theme is liberal culture's presumed trivialization of religion *per se*, not liberal misgivings about the Christian right's political program. In fact, Carter thinks liberals should resist the policy designs of Robertson & Co. He just doesn't think it is necessary or appropriate to attack the religious *source* of these designs. Religious motivation should never be an issue. According to Carter, what was objectionable about the 1992 Republican Convention was what Robertson and Buchanan *proposed*, not the fact that they used religious rhetoric to buttress their proposals.

On Carter's own reading of the nature of religion, however, there is no way to make a clean distinction between beliefs and policy prescriptions. As Carter correctly observes,

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Bible-believing Protestants are in many ways the last rationalists, only they construct their "rational" edifice on the foundation of God's special revelation in the Bible. Such believers treat the Bible as a compendium of direct answers to pressing social questions; one cannot, therefore, take issue with their politics without taking issue with their religion. Further, one might say that once conservatives (or liberals, for that matter) have introduced religious warrants for their policy proposals, they have to expect the debate to turn on the validity of those warrants.

But many liberals will be tongue-tied when it comes to religion; they may feel—perhaps with too little justification—that these matters were settled long ago, and that God lost. Moreover, the fact that they and the Bible believers inhabit separate epistemological worlds tends to make any useful "dialogue" about values exceedingly hard to bring off.

Nevertheless, Carter lays all the fault on the liberal side of this impasse. If liberals dare to say that the "God talk" of religious believers is mere gibberish, or that it is narrow minded, or that it is inappropriate in a particular policy context, they are guilty of contempt, and they may also be provoking a fearsome backlash among the righteous that will smite liberalism itself. Despite the absence of common epistemological assumptions, Carter says liberals must still take responsibility for initiating sympathetic "dialogue" with those who base their positions on God's will.

Carter will not even allow liberals to assume that religion has a built-in tropism toward conservatism in politics. Although there is no necessary connection between, say, Christian faith and illiberal outcomes, Carter should at least allow liberals to observe that the historical record has not been encouraging. A very scrupulous Yale theologian—Kathryn Tanner—recently devoted the bulk of her book on *The Politics of God* to showing that, despite the sorry history, Christian beliefs do not *logically* have to result in support for established social hierarchies, complicity in injustice, and quiescence in the face of evil. One wishes Carter could see as clearly as Tanner does that the burden of proof here must rest with believers. But of course he can't: he's much too fixated on the insensitivity of secular liberals to see that the anguished social legacy of Christianity could even be a serious issue.

To this Carter might reply that the *standards* to which Christianity is being held accountable are themselves drawn from a Judaic root. If he did, we would finally be getting somewhere, because the biggest failure of Carter's book is his complete obliviousness to the roots of the liberal critique in biblical culture. For whatever reason, Carter will not acknowledge that the kind of religion he accuses liberal culture of trivializing *has already made itself trivial* from the perspective of prophetic faith.

Carter altogether misses the point that the values of many if not most American liberals—"secular" or otherwise—have been shaped in part by the old biblical criteria. This explains why liberals will usually mistrust a one-sided emphasis on personal morality, as against social morality: they see it as evidence of shallowness and sanctimony in religious practice. Liberals recall that God is notably unmoved by displays of self-satisfied piety, and that what God desires most in human beings is deeds of justice and mercy. And while they may have grown cynical through the years about the prospects for justice and mercy in this society, most liberals are still not likely to deny a hearing to religious women and men who point to deeds of justice and mercy as abiding marks of faithfulness to God. On the other hand, those perfervid preachers and priests who would have Americans believe that God is really, really exercised about gay rights or rap music are apt to be dismissed by the liberal mainstream as meddlesome frauds. And dismissal is the appropriate response. After all, as the Book says, God is not mocked.

Lacking an ear for biblical religion, Carter apparently never notices that the Bible reserves its harshest judgments for those who cry "Lord! Lord!" while exploiting the poor and marginalized in their midst. But this is precisely the reason why American liberals rightly disdain the strident, superficial moralizing of the Robertsons and Falwells while revering the memory of Martin Luther King, Jr. If there is a double standard here, as Carter

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asserts there is, that double standard is solidly grounded in the tradition itself.

One leaves Carter's book wishing that its author had been able to grasp the crucial difference between the kind of religion that can shake an unjust society to its foundations and the trifling kind that concerns itself with window dressings at the charnel house. Thanks to its prophetic inheritance, the liberal culture that Carter wishes to upbraid knows this difference well. Carter does not, and so his book finally demeans the very faith it set out to defend. □

Ruth Rosen

THE POLITICS OF TRAUMA

TRAUMA AND RECOVERY, by Judith Lewis Herman. Basic Books, 1992. 288 pp. $14, paper.

We live in a therapeutic society that trivializes trauma. Every day, ordinary people confess their secrets to Oprah, Phil, and Geraldo. In every bookstore, shelves groan under the weight of self-help books that promise freedom from pain. Women who love too much. Men who don't love enough. Buy a book, find serenity. Purchase a video, melt away your disease.

In late-twentieth-century America, there is no such thing as tragedy or fate. If you just eat right and exercise enough, you'll live forever. If you have the poor taste to grow old, you can still find absolution through self-improvement programs. Even when natural disaster strikes—a fire or a flood consumes an entire community—a chorus of voices blames sufferers for building on hillsides or too close to the river's edge.

The idea of a self that can transcend fate runs deep in Western culture, but nowhere has it become as firmly entrenched as in American society. The Puritans tried to skirt predestination and an inscrutable God through a series of covenants that bordered on heresy. By the nineteenth century, religious perfectionists had eased the road to redemption. By the 1950s, all you had to do was stop at a drive-by church or read *The Power of Positive Thinking* and the goodies of American consumer society would come your way. The human potential movement of the 1970s made the cultivation and improvement of the self both the means and end of life's journey. Now, in the 1990s, everyone is said to be addicted to something, but an endless array of twelve-step programs promises deliverance of the self.

When polled, most Americans believe they have the right to pursue happiness. But as we all know, terrible things do happen to good people. A child dies. A spouse suddenly leaves. Innocent children are molested by priests or wounded by stray bullets. People commit suicide and leave inconsolable survivors. Decent folk are stricken with life-threatening disease. War, fast engulfing a good part of the globe, destroys families and communities, sending refugees fleeing in all directions. American resistance to what Europeans used to call the tragedy of the human condition creates a schizophrenic culture in which we either blame our victims or, when we discover a new social evil, see everyone as victims.

Finding some middle ground between these extremes is rare in American writing. American feminism, deeply rooted in this political culture, has shown all the signs of these extremist tendencies. As feminists in the 1970s redefined the personal as political and excavated all sorts of hidden injuries, they had to fight against a culture in which women who had been raped, battered, or sexually abused were either blamed or disbelieved. Against this blame-the-victim syndrome, many feminists joined the victimologists and proclaimed all women the innocent victims of men's uncontrollable lust.

Judith Lewis Herman is a major feminist therapist and writer who still searches for that vanishing middle ground. An expert at excavating the tragedy of trauma, she is the author of *Father-Daughter Incest*, which helped certify the prevalence of incestual trauma. Her newest work, a wise and intelligent book titled *Trauma and Recovery,* is a cultural, political, and psychological meditation on the personal experience of trauma.

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Like many feminists, Herman believes that private and public tyranny are probably linked and traumatize people in similar ways. Yet, despite all the unspeakable traumas experienced in the twentieth century, we have yet to understand how the trauma experienced by an incest survivor is similar to—or differs from—that experienced by tortured political prisoners or combat veterans.

Herman is most interested in the psychological trauma that results from violence. "At the moment of trauma," she writes, "the victim is rendered helpless by overwhelming force. When the force is that of nature, we speak of disasters. When the force is that of another human being, we speak of atrocities. Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection and meaning." Whether the person is an incest survivor, combat veteran, or political prisoner, trauma is experienced as a feeling of "intense fear, helplessness, loss of control and annihilation."

Trauma does more than create terror. Traumatic events, Herman writes, "call into question basic human relationships. They breach the attachments of family, friendship, love, and community. They shatter the construction of the self that is formed and sustained in relation to others. They undermine the belief systems that give meaning to human experience. They violate the victim's faith in a natural or divine order and cast the victim into a state of existential crisis." Those who have been traumatized will undoubtedly recognize many of their feelings in this elegantly written book.

But Herman's most important contribution is her exploration of the *politics* of trauma. When and under what conditions is a trauma recognized for what it is in a particular culture? Freud, as we now know, backed off from pursuing the sexual origins of hysteria. What he first identified as the sexual abuse of young women, he eventually saw as women's sexual fantasies. After the publication of his brilliant, early study *The Aetiology of Hysteria*, which he hoped would bring him glory, Freud confessed to one of his colleagues, "I am as isolated as you could wish me to be; the word has been given out to abandon me, and a void is forming around me." Victorian Vienna was not yet ready for his revelation.

It takes a political movement to make a particular trauma visible, Herman argues. The modern feminist movement, for example, was necessary for society to believe that the hidden injuries of sex—incest, rape, or domestic violence—really exist. "Women did not have a name for the tyranny of private life," writes Herman. "It was difficult to recognize that a well-established democracy in the public sphere could coexist with conditions of primitive autocracy or advanced dictatorship in the home." A political movement, however, was able to "name" traumas that had not yet entered public consciousness.

Combat veterans, according to Herman, also required a political movement to turn their trauma into a legitimate disorder. During World War I, up to 40 percent of British soldiers broke down in shell shock, weeping and sobbing in the midst of trench warfare. Most military doctors regarded them with disdain and sent them quickly back to battle. Many civilians viewed them as cowards who aped women's hysterical symptoms.

During the 1970s, even as they were scorned as baby killers, an astonishing number of Vietnam veterans fought against their own nightmares—as well as society's negative depiction of their combat experience—to convince the psychiatric and medical communities that post-traumatic stress disorder was a horrifying and real consequence of their Vietnam tour. As their movement grew, Vietnam veterans gradually gave post-traumatic stress disorder a dignity and manliness that it was formerly denied. By 1980, they had won their fight to have the disorder accepted by the psychiatric profession.

The second half of Herman's book explores how people recover from trauma. Fortunately, Herman has not written a self-help book filled with lists and exercises that promise recovery. Rather, she provides a thoughtful analysis of the trajectory individuals traverse as they move from trauma toward recovery.

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With considerable detail, Herman describes the three major symptoms that traumatized people tend to experience. First there is the numbing denial that protects individuals from the shock of trauma. The intrusion of flashbacks, though painful, helps people integrate the trauma into their memory. Another symptom, hyperarousal, reflects the persistent expectation of danger. Sometimes the symptoms appear sequentially, sometimes simultaneously. Eventually, the task of healing helps some or all of these symptoms to disappear.

Determined to politicize trauma, Herman argues that those who recover best are people who discover some meaning that transcends the limits of personal tragedy, often through political or social activism. This is a controversial assertion that can be overstated. Some people may heal best through spiritual or other means. Still, Herman convincingly argues that what is required is a new interpretation of the trauma. She quotes one incest survivor, for example, who took the fact that she had absolutely no recollection of early painful memories as an occasion to rethink simplistic ideas about knowledge: "My pride of intellect has been battered. If I didn't know about half my own life, what other knowledge can I trust? Yet here I see a gift, for in place of my narrow pragmatic world of cause and effect, I have burst into an infinite world full of wonder."

This is a provocative book and I can't help but wish that Herman had extended her analysis to more examples of trauma, especially those nightmares that have afflicted whole populations. Every day we read about trauma: the rape of Bosnian women; the torture of political prisoners; the destruction of a village by an earthquake. How do survivors of shared trauma recover from these events? Are the symptoms of trauma experienced by incest victims, tortured prisoners, and combat veterans the same as those experienced by people whose society has disintegrated into ceaseless war?

Although Herman does not discuss such shared trauma, the symptoms she describes may in fact be applied to entire cultures or communities. Take the Vietnam War, which certainly was experienced as a national trauma. After the loss of the war, the nation went into denial. Many subjects became unspeakable, including the bravery of combat veterans and especially the courage of antiwar resisters.

After denial, hyperarousal, and flashbacks, came two contrasting resolutions to the trauma. First, the nation became fidgety even at the thought of war and the "Vietnam syndrome" prevented a number of possible military interventions. At the same time, as Susan Jeffords has argued, American culture gradually reinterpreted the nation's military loss through a remasculinization of the culture. During the 1980s American popular culture refought the war in endless films and novels. It is no accident that Rambo asks: "Do we get to win it this time?" By the Gulf War, George Bush could gloat, "By God, we kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all."

At the very moment I was reading Herman's book, an entire community was traumatized by an industrial accident. A ruptured railroad car at a General Chemical Corporation plant sent a ghastly fifteen-mile-long toxic plume of sulfuric acid through the residential district of North Richmond, California, one of the poorest and most devastated African-American communities in the United States. The result of environmental racism, North Richmond sits surrounded by a strip of chemical plants and oil refineries that constitute one of the nation's worst toxic hot spots. Over twenty thousand people sought treatment and reassurance at nearby hospitals.

A contingent of parasites—academic researchers and journalists—briefly parachuted into the community, but left as soon as they had collected their data. Who will help this community, which was clearly traumatized, move toward recovery? The individual and group therapy sessions Herman advocates for victims of trauma won't be made available to this ravaged community.

In this elegantly reasoned work, Herman offers an important insight into the politics of trauma. For a traumatic experience to receive any public attention, as Herman argues, it must be politicized. Otherwise the wound remains invisible, disbelieved, and barred from public consciousness. Even more, Herman reminds us that one must also have the political clout to force public attention. And that, alas, many traumatized individuals or communities do not have. □

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Paul Buhle & Eric Rice-Maximin

A SOCIALIST OF THE HEART

A WILLIAM APPLEMAN WILLIAMS READER, edited by Henry W. Berger. Ivan R. Dee, 1992. 415 pp. $16.95, paper.

William Appleman Williams, the most influential U.S. historian since Charles and Mary Beard, was also a most curious socialist thinker. While keenly interested in Marx, he remained a romantic "socialist of the heart" who favored a decentralized, regionalist cooperativism. In the absence of socialism, however, he preferred "enlightened conservatism," *à la* Herbert Hoover, to the corporate liberalism of Woodrow Wilson or Harry Truman. Much like his fellow (unacknowledged) Christian socialist Michael Harrington, Williams aspired to reach "middle America" with radical ideas. But his impact remained essentially scholarly. Indeed, he was rarely an activist, and never joined any left-wing group.

This summary barely begins to indicate Williams's paradoxical qualities. He practically launched the great wave of "revisionist" or "New Left" history, yet he broke sharply with student antiwar militants for being too inclined toward campus confrontations and toward what he viewed as escapist anti-intellectualism. Unlike the radical social historians of the 1960s and 1970s, such as Herbert Gutman, who wrote heavily about the poor, Williams focused on elites.

Usually considered an "economic interpretationist," Williams was at bottom more of an intellectual or cultural historian who sought to define the various worldviews that shaped the national experience.

An answer to the Williams riddle can be found partly in the dynamics of changing historical scholarship. When Williams began writing during the early 1950s, mainstream historians dismissed the idea of conflict in American history, and held a messianic view of America's role in world affairs. But the University of Wisconsin, where Williams did his graduate work, had for generations been a center of methodological "revisionism." A "progressive" or "Beardian" tradition there stressed the social and economic factors essential to an understanding of the past. Williams and his students drastically revised the study of foreign relations, examining a broad network of influences—chiefly economic—behind policy decisions. In their broader view of the United States, they accepted key premises of existing "consensus" history and sought to synthesize American history around themes of consent—a consensus they found anything but benevolent.

Until the 1960s, the emerging Williams "school" hardly received an enthusiastic national response. But it caught on with the generation of graduate students shaped by the Vietnam War and the antiwar movements. Shocked to learn that America behaved like any other empire, they found in Williams's lectures and books a persuasive explanation of how it all came about. A plethora of "revisionist" histories followed during the 1960s and 1970s, many of them extensions, popularizations, or (as in the case of David Horowitz's widely read books) vulgarizations of Williams. The historiography of U.S. foreign relations was permanently changed in the process. So was the history of the American West, for which Williams had almost unwittingly supplied a new key: expansionism as the pseudosolution to the problems of democracy, and American history as a perpetual frontier of the Open Door with conquest its dominating theme.

Most of today's historians agree with Williams that the United States is an empire and bears heavy responsibility for the cold war—even if they bury such considerations amid a myriad of other issues. A handful, such as Martin J. Sklar and Thomas McCormick, build more directly on Williams, identifying through "corporatism" a cluster of elites dominating American policies. Historians of the West such as Patricia Limerick reflect his philosophical outlook in their nuanced regionalism. Still others, such as Immanuel Wallerstein, examine "world-systems" to provide a transnational view of world empire, retaining Williams's focus on economic factors. In these days Marx may not be politically fashionable,

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but if (as seems likely) his usefulness is destined to survive as long as capitalism, then Williams's influence will likewise last as long as the American Empire.

Empire as a Way of Life, containing the reflections of a lifetime, continues to circulate widely, and William's two most famous works, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* and *The Contours of American History*, have recently returned to print. *A William Appleman Williams Reader*, edited by Henry W. Berger, now adds a concise selection of Williams's major writings.

Berger, himself one of Williams's students, sketches the master's life and briefly analyzes each of his major works in a substantial introduction. Born in 1921, Williams grew up amid the kind of prairie liberalism that has nurtured anti-imperial prophets from Robert M. LaFollette to George McGovern. He entered a military academy on a basketball scholarship, and then went on to the Naval Academy. During the last years of World War II, Williams served as executive officer on a landing craft, where he sustained injuries painful the rest of his life. Stationed in Corpus Christi, he became involved in local civil rights activities, much to the displeasure of the Navy. Mustered out in 1947, he entered graduate school at the University of Wisconsin, to study history.

Here, Williams's life changed rapidly. A radical campus whose students (many of them veterans) voted in droves against compulsory ROTC while thespians staged *Lysistrata*, Madison also boasted a multifaceted resistance to impending McCarthyism. Some of its U.S. historians supported Norman Thomas for president in 1948, and others speculated on whether the Constitutional Convention of 1783 had been an expression of statist tyranny.

Williams's scholarly path was definitely "Madisonian" in this geopolitical sense. He wrote his master's and doctoral theses about the response of U.S. elites to the Russian revolution. He also spent part of 1948 in England, studying decentralized economic models in Leeds with British Labour party intellectuals. His first major work, *American-Russian Relations, 1781–1947* (represented in Selection 1), stressed the United States challenge to any restrictions on the Open Door. An epilogue taking on George F. Kennan's "containment" thesis (Selection 2) barely missed publication in *Foreign Affairs*. A widely assigned classroom anthology, *The Shaping of American Diplomacy, 1750–1955* (1956) offered a fresh and critical look at the entire diplomatic tradition. Meanwhile, Williams experienced a rough start at teaching, having fatally flunked an Ohio State football player and faced down McCarthyism at the University of Oregon. By 1957, he was ready to return to Madison.

A campus coming back from the cold war was eager to greet him. The Socialist Club, a bastion of young radicals, idolized Williams. (Its members went on to found *Studies On the Left*, very much in his image. The journal's central figure, James Weinstein, still edits *In These Times*, with a decidedly Williamsesque flavor.) He cultivated talented graduate students, including Walter LaFeber, Lloyd Gardner, Thomas McCormick, and Martin Sklar, all destined to become major "revisionists." Sklar coined the term "corporate liberalism," the explanatory catchphrase of New Left analysis used to explore the background of the Democrats' support for the Vietnam War.

Meanwhile, Williams himself produced key scholarly essays (Selections 3–5) on isolationism, the frontier thesis, and the legacy of Charles Beard. His most famous book, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, published in 1959 (Selections 6–8), seemed to predict the winding down of U.S.-Soviet confrontation as the principal focus of world tension. He argued that the historic linking of democracy and prosperity to unlimited economic expansion brought the U.S. into ever-increasing conflicts with a variety of peoples who wanted to reorder their collective lives in their own fashion.

Prestigious liberal and conservative historians naturally considered such ideas anathema. Former New Dealer Adolph Berle, however, tried to lure Williams into the Kennedy administration. Williams wisely decided to stay in Madison, but soon found himself harassed by the House Committee on Un-American

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Activities, which tried unsuccessfully to seize his next manuscript, *The Contours of American History* (Selections 9–11), published in 1961. In an original and far-reaching interpretation, Williams showed how certain leading "world-views" (the productive "mercantilism" of early days, the destructive "laissez-nous faire" of Jacksonianism, and the manipulative "corporatism" of the late nineteenth century and beyond) had informed and distorted the national experience. Although Harvard's Oscar Handlin dismissed the book as "an elaborate hoax," *Contours* caught on quickly with younger scholars, including many outside the field of history.

Williams next sought to relate his ideas to Marx, as evidenced in his uneven 1963 volume, *The Great Evasion: An Essay on the Contemporary Relevance of Karl Marx and on the Wisdom of Admitting the Heretic into the Dialogue about America's Future* (Selection 12). Yet he remained basically Americocentric, and a moralist. In *The Roots of the Modern American Empire* (1969, Selection 13) he argued that farmers and rural businessmen (the majority of Americans) had anticipated by several decades the East Coast industrial and financial elites' quest for overseas markets and even colonial possessions. This time, at the high tide of the New Left, traditional historians praised Williams's exhaustive archival research while many radicals were outraged at his conclusions.

Discouraged by campus confrontations and exhausted by training dozens of graduate students, Williams abandoned Madison for a safe haven on the Oregon coast. He had finished his major scholarly volumes, and now turned to works of reflection. *Some Presidents: Wilson to Nixon* (Selection 14), reprinted from a series in the *New York Review of Books*, revealed his sardonic wit at its best. *America Confronts a Revolutionary World (1776–1976)* (Selection 16), written for the Bicentennial, argued once more that the United States had subverted its original commitment to self-determination. *Empire as a Way of Life: An Essay on the Causes and Character of America's Present Predicament Along with a Few Thoughts About an Alternative* (1980, Selection 17), called upon Americans to confront their past, to limit and improve their empire or dismantle it entirely and create genuine, that is, decentralized, communities.

Williams enjoyed his signal professional triumph in 1980, when he was elected president of the Organization of American Historians. His "Confessions of an Intransigent Revisionist" (Selection 15) and "The Annapolis Crowd" (Selection 18) mark his self-assessment and his final word. Increasingly wrenched with physical pain, Williams succumbed to cancer in 1990.

Some Recent and Forthcoming Books by *Dissent* Editors

Mitchell Cohen, *The Wager of Lucien Goldmann: Tragedy, Dialectics, and the Hidden God*, Princeton University Press, 1994.

Mitchell Cohen and Nicole Ferman, eds., *Thinking Politically: Classic Readings Since Plato*, Princeton University Press, 1994.

Bogdan Denitch, *Ethnic Nationalism: The Tragic Death of Yugoslavia*, University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, *Women In Law* (second edition, with a new preface and epilogue), University of Illinois Press, 1993.

Robert Heilbroner, *21st Century Capitalism*, Norton, 1993.

Erazim Kohák, *Člověk, dobro a zlo*, J & J Publishers, 1993.

Erazim Kohák, *Jan Patočka: filosofický životopis*, Nakladatelstvi H a H, 1993.

Erazim Kohák, *Jak na vodě kola*, Ministerstvo zivotniho prostredi, 1993.

Harold Meyerson and Ernest Harburg, *Who Put the Rainbow In the Wizard of Oz? Yip Harburg, Lyricist*, University of Michigan Press, 1993.

Nicolaus Mills, editor, *Debating Affirmative Action: Race, Gender, Ethnicity, and the Politics of Inclusion*, Dell, 1994.

Bernard Rosenberg and Ernest Harburg, *The Broadway Musical: Collaboration in Commerce and Art*, New York University Press, 1993.

Sean Wilentz and Paul E. Johnson, *The Kingdom of Matthias*, Oxford University Press, 1994.

Dennis H. Wrong, *The Problem of Order: What Unites and Divides Society*, the Free Press, 1994.

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More than anything else, Williams wanted Americans to grow up and face their history, with all the responsibilities inherent in it. He hoped that they might recuperate the original promise of the American Revolution: not a license to Empire but the possibility of universal emancipation from empires of any kind. Then, and only then, could they live and act within a community, simultaneously citizens of the world. □

H. Brand

PENSIONS AND PRIVILEGE

LABOR'S CAPITAL: THE ECONOMICS AND POLITICS OF PRIVATE PENSIONS, by Teresa Ghilarducci. The MIT Press, 1992. 213 pp. $35.

This is a well-written, well-argued book. It is a critical assessment of the private pension system and an account of its transformation into a major element of capital accumulation and corporate finance strategy. The author devotes a large part of her work to the possibilities of pension reforms that will benefit the mass of workers excluded from the system. To that end she advocates a mandatory universal pension system that would, in effect, envelope the Social Security system. It would be advance-funded (not financed on a pay-as-you-go basis), which would minimize the intergenerational transfers of income that have become politically burdensome to Social Security; and would thus also enlarge the savings (or capital) pool available for public investment.

Ghilarducci pointedly argues against the unions' position that private pensions are the property of labor. This position has no firm legal or institutional basis. Pension funds are autonomous entities, subject, to be sure, to far-reaching corporate business incursions but also to a measure of regulatory control. Ghilarducci wants to do away with the notion of property rights pertaining to the private pension system and shift to social needs criteria. Her book, then, seems mistitled, unless *Labor's Capital* is understood as an assertion that pension assets represent the fruit of the labor of society as a whole.

Ghilarducci argues that the evolution of private pensions in the United States has stymied the adoption of an adequate universal system of social insurance. It is worthwhile to examine what adequacy in terms of a retirement income has meant. President Jimmy Carter's Commission on Pension Policy held that the standard of living of retired persons should not be lower than what it was prior to retirement. The commission took the conventional view that Social Security benefits should provide no more than a minimum base of income, and that the difference between that and the desired retirement income should come from personal savings and private pensions. To that end, the commission proposed a *mandated* minimum universal pension system.

The commission's proposals came to naught. Private pensions contributed only 8 percent to the aggregate income of elderly persons (65 and over) in 1988 (latest available data), as against 38 percent for Social Security. Elderly persons with annual incomes less than $10,000 received 4 percent or less in private pension, and three-fifths or more of their income in Social Security payments. Little more than one-half of all full-time workers are covered by pensions; that proportion, which more than doubled between 1945 and 1970, has not changed since. Women with work experience are far less likely to be entitled to a pension than men, and black workers less likely to be entitled than white workers. Finally, only about 29 percent of all aged persons actually receive pensions, compared with 92 percent who receive Social Security.

The private pension system thus has given rise to great inequities between covered and uncovered workers. But inequities also exist *within* the private pension system. Benefits go disproportionately to the more privileged strata of employees. The disparity between benefits received by these employees and benefits received by the average worker by far exceeds the differences between pre-retirement earnings. The average worker's pension benefits equal 15 percent of pre-retirement income;

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those of the more privileged employee, 25 percent. The disparities represent "one of the most regressive aspects of pension plan provisions," although the unions often negotiate benefit formulas unrelated to earnings, or formulas that are progressive, that is, which replace a higher proportion of lower-paid workers' pre-retirement earnings than those of higher-paid workers.

Private pensions were originally intended as a means to tie favored workers to companies—they began as a feature of "welfare capitalism." The Great Depression ended that era; in 1940, only 17 percent of all full-time workers were covered by private pensions.

The private pension system grew in response to federal anti-inflationary policies during World War II. High excess profits taxes were levied on business, which, however, escaped them by sheltering excess earnings in (untaxed) pension trusts. Wage controls steered collective bargaining toward winning fringe benefits, including pensions. Subsequently, pensions became major issues in collective bargaining: business did not want to concede this benefit to the unions, while unions felt compelled to make pensions a subject of collective bargaining inasmuch as adequate Social Security measures had been repeatedly delayed by Congress. "The American worker was . . . faced with the question of awaiting Congressional action or attempting to win some of these benefits through collective bargaining," stated the CIO in its official journal in 1949. The Taft-Hartley Act and Supreme Court decisions confirmed pensions as a legitimate subject of collective bargaining. After 1950, pensions became a minor source of labor-management conflict. However, the growth of a private system of social insurance at best retarded the evolution of Social Security in providing adequate retirement income, and virtually prevented the creation of a national, single-payer health-care system.

Federal regulation of the private pension system arose in the wake of the bankruptcy of the Studebaker Corporation in 1964 and the cutoff of pension payments to its workers. The Employment Retirement Income Security Administration (ERISA) and the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC), ERISA's pension insurance arm, were created in 1974. They set standards governing the funding of pensions, insure against loss of benefits due to bankruptcy or other factors, and keep workers informed of their pension rights.

Unforeseen when the two agencies were created was the enormous rise in the role of pension funds in corporate financial strategy, as the stock market boom raised pension fund values during the 1980s. Corporate control over the pension funds was evidenced dramatically by the wave of appropriations of pension asset "surpluses"—the excess of asset values over liabilities (such excess having been enlarged by the stock market boom). The surplus assets were not passed on to beneficiaries in the form of higher wages or invested in more productive plant and equipment, but were used mainly in buyouts, increased shareholder dividends, and other forms of financial manipulation. All this involved the termination of well over 2,000 pension plans covering 2.4 million people. Ghilarducci estimates that beneficiaries lost 50 percent of their benefits when their plans were replaced with inferior ones. The practice has declined in recent years as public censure has asserted itself and surplus assets have shrunk. Nevertheless, the authority of the regulatory agencies was weakened, and confidence in the security of the private pension system undermined.

And this all the more so as underfunding looms as a very large financial problem for the PBGC, Congress, and the federal government. The PBGC has estimated that it is exposed to underfunding of pension plans amounting to $12 billion (and in the longer run more than four times higher), chiefly in such declining areas as steel, tire, automobile, and airline industries. If a deep recession occurs and bankruptcies spread, federal pension insurance will not suffice; it will either have to be supplemented by Congress or be reduced, and so will benefits.

The private pension system is quite costly in

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terms of public funds. Its exemption from federal income tax cost an estimated $53 billion in 1991; pension funds may be invested in socially unredeeming projects; underfunding shifts corporate obligations to the Government (the PBGC). As Ghilarducci observes, "The fact that a voluntary private pension system is enormously expensive to the taxpayer is contradictory: If a system is private, why does it involve so much public support? The taxpayer's largesse warrants a reevaluation of the private pension system's merit."

Ghilarducci recommends the "gradual democratization and replacement of the voluntary private pension system" by "a nationalized and universal advance-funded scheme." Her book may be read as a cogent argument for such a scheme. She would, as a beginning, set aside 10 percent for pension fund investment in social capital, such as affordable housing. She believes that the pension fund industry—banks, insurance companies, money managers—could hardly object to so small a share of assets being devoted to a "social capital development fund." It is too optimistic an assumption. The current struggle over provision of health-care reaffirms the power of the private insurers and other private interests. Persuasive as her arguments are, and important as it is to back them in the interest of working people, they stand little chance of being realized. □

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Sticking with the Union

Editors:

In his "In Defense of Public Education" (*Dissent*, Spring 1993), Herbert Kohl takes some uninformed and politically thoughtless swipes at teacher unionism. Teacher unions stand in the way of the necessary change in public education, he charges. They "are too insular and do not relate to the communities they are supposed to serve or speak in ordinary language to parents and concerned citizens about quality public schooling." If public education is to be saved, teacher unions must take on a task of "reach(ing) out to a wider public with visions of public schools that work."

The sole evidence Kohl offers for these negative generalizations are a few reminiscences of thirty-year-old experiences with the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) in New York City public schools. After the UFT won a strike for official recognition in the 1960s, he complains, the union leadership abandoned "teaching issues as union issues" for a single-minded focus on salary increases and benefits; it was no longer concerned with "negotiating over conditions of teaching, supplies, control over curriculum and self-accountability." As a profile of New York teacher unionism three decades ago, Kohl's commentary is open to challenge; as an argument for the failures of contemporary teacher unionism, it is a poor excuse for serious and thoughtful analysis.

For the last decade I have taught in an inner-city high school in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. During these years I have been an activist in the UFT and in progressive educational projects. The portrait Kohl paints is an unrecognizable caricature. Educational issues—and more important, educational change and reform—have been a major and growing concern of the UFT and its national union, the American Federation of Teachers, during this period. The UFT has initiated contractual language that has given teachers professional autonomy in lesson planning, professional conciliation in conflicts with supervisors over pedagogical issues, and control over a pool of funds for supplies; mentoring for novice teachers and peer intervention for tenured teachers failing in the classroom have also been negotiated. It has developed a process for school faculties to alter through democratic votes regulations and contractual provisions that stood in the way of educational experiments and has supported school-based management and shared decision-making governance projects in schools. The UFT has developed a wide array of teacher education and collaboration programs dedicated to educational reform and has been among the strongest advocates of meaningful educational experiments in New York City schools. The AFT has become a forceful presence and participant in every major national debate over education reform, from national standards to teacher professionalization. Whatever criticisms one might want to make of its stance on particular issues, and I would personally dissent on some points, there is no more consistent or more powerful voice for change in education.

I know of no one active in the UFT who believes that it has done all it can and should do in the area of educational change; rather, there is an acute focus on the continuing problems of public education in New York City, on how much still needs to be done.

Kohl's treatment of teacher unionism is symptomatic of a major blindspot in his strategy for "the defense of public education." He highlights as central to educational change alternative public schools, small networks of progressive educators, and desktop progressive education journals. These institutions do have a positive role to play in the reform process, if only as incubating laboratories in which new ideas and practices can be tried and improved. But unless they are integrated into larger processes of systematic change, alternative public schools and educational institutions are quickly marginalized, and become utopian communities of educational reform. As institutions of self-selected students and teachers committed to a particular vision of education, such schools might provide friendly learning communities for the children of middle-class leftists, but are of limited relevance to the political project of transforming public education. Systemic educational change requires the leadership and full participation of teacher unions, the only established mass educational institution with both the means and the will to pursue that project. Any "defense of public education" worthy of its name must take this political reality into account.

Leo Casey
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Herb Kohl Replies:

It may be that educational change and reform have been "a major and growing concern" of the UFT and the AFT over the last decade. However, that depends upon what one means by change and reform. If change means giving teachers' unions more power and if reform means giving people who have failed to deliver decent education to their students freedom from evaluation then Casey is right. If, in addition, support for national testing and a national curriculum is considered a way to effect greater learning

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then perhaps one should concede that these unions are committed to change. However, if serving students in more effective, humane ways, and remaking the curriculum to reflect the fact that we live in a diverse and culturally complex society with serious racial, gender, and authority problems, then the leadership of the unions can be faulted, even more than my article implied, for being blind or complicit with bad practice.

Of course there are progressive individuals within the UFT and AFT, and they have struggled, both within their schools and the union, to develop more equitable and effective education. Recently, through organizations such as the National Coalition of Educational Activists and the Network of Progressive Educators I have met union activists who are themselves critical of many union practices. But since the ascendancy of Shanker and his conservative wing of the union, they have been in a distinct and embattled minority.

I think the major problem with Casey's position is that it implies that any public criticism of union practices is tantamount to rejecting unionism. I agree with him that no significant change will take place without the full participation of teachers' unions, and am a unionist myself. But I refuse to defend any service organization that exists solely to serve the workers and ignores the fate of the people served. Teachers' unions, in my view, do this to an excessive degree these days and find themselves in opposition to their most logical allies. Teachers can and must join with communities to preserve and improve public education. □

Immigrants and Racist Attitudes

Editors:

That Lee Siegel's Summer "Notebook" entry on racism among his ESL students reaches a conclusion so lacking in acuity is perhaps not surprising given the rocky analytical start to which it gets off. Siegel begins by recounting an ESL faculty meeting convened to discuss the anti-black sentiments many instructors had found among their students, recent Russian-Jewish emigrés. "It seemed to me that evening that the question—for African Americans no less than for immigrants—was whether prejudice could exist without hatred or the wish to do harm." This is only the most abstract and facile of many questions that could be raised: of course prejudice can exist without animosity. Far more compelling concerns about the bigotry at issue would be that stereotypes, hate-filled or not, are inherently dehumanizing; that the prejudices Siegel and his colleagues described (including beliefs that African Americans are animals and are possessed of undersized brains) were decidedly perjorative, that is, the kind of prejudices that often *do* lead to harmful impulses; that the immigrant students, to the extent that they realize their dream of rapidly ascending the American status-ladder, will move into positions of power from which they will be able to exercise harmful intentions; and that the kind of people who read and write for a democratic socialist publication might be troubled over the spread among one impoverished community of stereotypes that blind it to the needs and commonalities it shares with another.

Having excluded such matters from consideration, however, Siegel proceeds to give his rendition of racial issues from the immigrants' point of view. He produces a fine sympathetic account, casting light on experiences in both the former Soviet Union and the United States that have cultivated the immigrants' negative and stereotyped perceptions of their African-American neighbors. Considerably less sympathy is on hand for the English teachers at the meeting, whom Siegel portrays as bonding together in self-righteous and unfair condemnation of their students. "There was an unspoken sentiment in the room that those Russians who couldn't learn to speak the language of tolerance should go back to where they came from." From here Siegel's report spirals rapidly downward to a snipe that the faculty supervisor "urged us to make clear to the Russians—who had given up their old lives partly because of all the good things they heard about the First Amendment—that you can't say whatever you want in America." He tells with pride how he ignored this exhortation during the next week's class, when he refrained from engaging a student's anti-Haitian prejudice: "I certainly was not going to tell her what to think."

Why on earth not? Siegel appears to have trouble drawing meaningful conclusions even from good foundations. Here he has taken an admirable sympathy for the confusions and tribulations his students face to mean that he must refrain from doing his part to acculturate them to American progressivism. Similarly, he has misinterpreted the First Amendment, which is designed precisely to protect the vigorous and critical exchange of ideas, to mean that criticizing the speech of one's fellows is proscribed. Ultimately he employs a double standard, however, for he evidently considers it acceptable to print a critique of his ESL colleagues. Likewise, he implies that the myriad voices in American culture that have fed the immigrants' racist notions are part of some authentic, and hence sacrosanct, "immigrant experience"; but that his colleagues' attempts to express the countervailing arguments of a leftist America are inauthentic, judgmental, and wrong.

Sympathy and respect do not mandate silence. Moreover, if supposed leftists feel compelled to remain mute about bigotry when it happens to emanate from impoverished communities, they ultimately show very little respect for poor people's ability to hear and think in new ways. What hope then remains for the struggle to forge a coalition that will critique, confront, and change an oppressive society?

Roberta S. Gold
New York, N.Y.

Lee Siegel Replies:

What with Roberta Gold taking me to task for not telling people how to think, scolding me for criticizing what the other ESL teachers said, and accusing me of violating the

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First Amendment, I'm a little anxious about replying to her letter, but I'll take a chance.

No, I don't think it's the job of leftists, supposed or otherwise, to instruct people in what they should or shouldn't say, let alone think. That ESL teachers, all of them white and most of them products of the upper class, should undertake to do so with newly arrived immigrants on public assistance who can barely speak English provoked me to write about it as an extreme instance of politically correct narcissism. And as my examples made clear, I hardly think there is anything "sacrosanct" about immigrants' racism. The crux of my piece was the "anti-Haitian" student Gold refers to, who in the end voted in a classroom exercise to allow Haitian refugees into America. My point was that I didn't have to bully her into voting that way.

Yes, racism is ugly and destructive. But I am sure Gold would agree that, especially for teachers, it is important to show contempt for racial prejudice while at the same time making sure not to overwhelm benighted students with one's own moral superiority. As for how progressives should relate to disenfranchised people, I am inclined to think that "Workers of the World, Be Polite" is inadequate as a motto to inspire solidarity. Indeed, though I've since left the ESL profession as a way to support my depredations against democratic socialism, I've learned that the supervisor Gold admires as a representative of "leftist America" has thrown herself into trying to bust the teachers' union. Go figure. □

Cuba Si! Grass No!

Editors:

Yesterday, my father risked his life in the fight against the Batista dictatorship; today, he does not drool apologies for Fidel Castro. This distinguishes him from Günter Grass in two important regards.

He, like the majority of Cubans outside of the island, wants only two things for the people of Cuba—freedom and hope. The absence of both is the result of Castro's tyranny, not the international embargo.

GUILLERMO MARMOL
Dallas, Tx. □

Irving Howe at City College

Editors:

Of all the tributes to Irving Howe in *Dissent* (Fall 1993) only that of Daniel Bell touches the City College experience, but then only the period of 1938–39.

As organizer of the Young People's Socialist League (YPSL) captured by the Trotskyists and a supporter of the faction led by Max Shachtman, I was Irving's comrade in building a revolutionary alternative to the powerful Young Communist League. Irving played a key role not only in the writing of flyers, but also in his editing of our mimeoed magazine, "The CCNY Redbook."

We exposed the duplicity and brutal totalitarianism of the Stalinist movement by revealing Stalin's sale of oil to Mussolini in the Italo-Ethiopian War; in the assassination of Andres Nin and the persecution of the POUM and Anarchists in the Spanish Civil War; in shining the glare of harsh truth on the Moscow frame-up trials so dramatically presented in a historic confrontation between Max Shachtman and the Stalinist faculty leader Morris Schappes.

This was the milieu where Irving developed his talents and skills in brilliantly setting forth his ideas in politics and literature. This was our real education at City College.

ISRAEL KUGLER
New York, N.Y. □

Editors:

I'm surely not the only one of your readers to be disappointed and perplexed by the paucity of women's voices in your pages. Only three out of twenty-six contributors to your Summer issue, to judge by their names, are women—not an atypical ratio, and one you should be embarrassed by. Polls I've seen suggest that women are if anything more heavily represented on the political left than men are; can't you manage to find a few more of us to join the discussion? I hope I don't have to explain to you why this is more than a matter of tokenism. Women's perspectives on the issues most important to the left often differ from men's in significant and interesting ways. *Dissent* could only be enriched by including more of them.

MARYA E. VAN'T HUL
Somerville, Mass. □

Request for Information

I am compiling information for a thesis on post-1945 American History. I am specializing in the history of Abbie Hoffman, the Yippie movement, and the 1968 Democratic convention (including the Chicago Seven conspiracy trial). If any reader could supply me with any information on these subjects I would be grateful. My correspondence address is: Olivia Sinclair, College Misericordia, PO Box 203, Dallas, PA, 18612.

OLIVIA SINCLAIR
Dallas, Penna. □

Erratum

We regret that the first sentence of the last paragraph of Anson Rabinbach's article in the Fall issue ("Fire and Blood in Germany") carried an incorrect statistic. It should read "Perhaps more disconcerting is a recent poll that revealed that 70 percent of the population is skeptical that either of the two major parties can solve 'political problems' in Germany." □

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The Last Page

In my Upper West Side neighborhood in New York, the latest in-spot is a bookstore. That a bookstore should have such drawing power says much about my neighbors. But it also says much about the bookstore—a new Barnes & Noble superstore.

In contrast to most large bookstores, which—with their wide aisles and glaring fluorescent lights—resemble supermarkets, the new Barnes & Noble is all understatement. It has soft green carpets, inset bookcases, brass light fixtures, and instead of bright signs advertising discounts, its walls are hung with framed caricatures of famous writers. Parts of the store even have William Morris wallpaper. If the bookstore suggests anything, it is an old-fashioned library.

You have to look closely for the modern touches—the long row of cash registers, the computers for checking on the stock. The store is genuinely reader-friendly. It has a coffee bar on its mezzanine floor, where you're left free to read a book, and throughout the store, in strategic corners, there are comfortable chairs and tables at which you can sit and do more reading. There is no pressure on you to buy, just as at the numerous readings it sponsors (everyone from Jimmy Carter to Frank Conroy), there's no admission charge. It's all genteel seduction.

Barnes & Noble has already opened over 110 such superstores across the country, and with $508 million in recapitalization funds—made possible when Vendex International, a Dutch conglomerate, bought 50 percent of Barnes & Noble stock in 1992—the company is prepared to keep adding more superstores to its chain.

I ought, I think, to be celebrating. We need more bookstores. But instead I'm worried about the impact of the superstores on the publishing industry. It is difficult to imagine how any independent bookstore can compete with the new superstores, or how publishers (who need little encouragement) can resist being seduced by what superstores do best—move best-sellers and mass-market paperbacks with the speed that a supermarket moves cereal.

Am I guilty of nostalgia for the small shopkeeper? In many ways, yes. But longing for a bookstore in which individuals care about the books they sell isn't the same as longing for more boutiques. Books don't thrive finally in an environment where they're marketed like clothes at Macy's—even an upscale Macy's.

For years *the* bookstore on Broadway was Shakespeare & Company (named after the famous Paris bookstore whose owner first published *Ulysses*). From the start Shakespeare & Company always carried a large poetry section, plenty of university press books, and a table featuring "staff picks" of new books. It still does. But walk into Shakespeare & Company on a Saturday night or a Sunday afternoon these days, and you find it almost deserted. It has lost the atmosphere battle to Barnes & Noble—and the discount battle as well. There is no way that Shakespeare & Company can match Barnes & Noble's 30 percent discount on *New York Times* best-sellers.

Shakespeare & Company may yet survive the Barnes & Noble competition. But if it does, it will be in diminished form, with its virtues—its eccentric staff picks, its willingness to stock books that move slowly—having to compensate even more for the pre-Barnes & Noble business it would have done in best-sellers and mass-market paperbacks. Even on the Upper West Side, I find it hard to persuade friends that 30 percent extra is a small price to pay for guaranteeing a bookstore that will always have e. e. cummings on its shelves.

—Nicolaus Mills □

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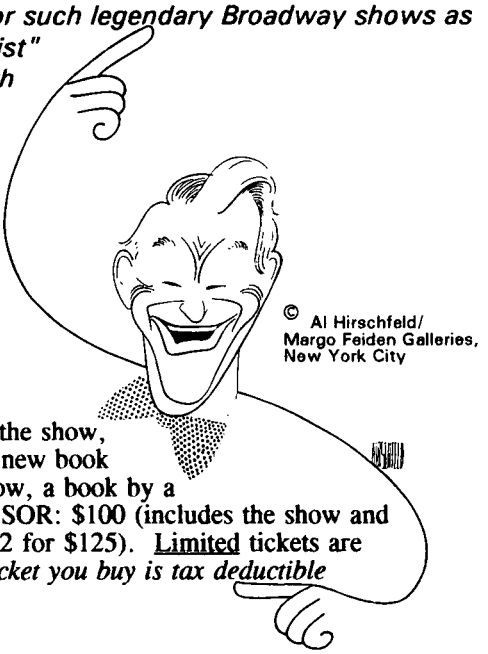

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